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MODERN GERMAN MUSIC.

BY

HENRY F. CHORLEY.

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TO

The Memory of

DEPARTED FRIENDS,

THESE PAGES ARE

GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

THE following book must not be offered to the public without a distinct statement of the materials of which it is composed.

A portion of it appeared in "Music and Manners in France and North Germany," which was published in the year 1841. Since that work was prepared, I have again and again visited North and South Germany, always, in such visits, looking to one and the same object of interest—always endeavouring to complete my knowledge of the state of musical creation, performance, and artistic life, as they existed previous to the year of confusion, 1848.—In more senses than one, the recent European revolution marks the close of a period;—and

I have fancied that, by throwing together my earlier and my later recollections and criticisms, some small contribution might possibly be made to the history of a favourite Art during the earlier half of the present century. With this view, the chapters on the Brunswick Festival, those on Music in Berlin, Leipsic, and Dresden, which made part of my former work, have been revised with great care. Many portions of them have been altogether re-written, and large additions made:* it being inevitable that in a record which aspired (within its own conditions) at completeness, certain prominent subjects should be touched upon, certain changes noted, certain reputations discussed. But though the revision has been sedulous, and though the new matter introduced is considerable, there has been

* Let me specify among these, the pages on Spontini as a musician—the chapters on the operas of Gluck—and on the works produced by Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer for Berlin—those on Madame Schröder Devrient and Herr Wagner at Dresden—at Weimar, the pages on M. Chèlard and on Hummel—at Leipsic, the comparison betwixt Bach and Handel—and the chapter on Musical Journalism.

no modification of judgment—no restatement of original impressions. It has been my fortune (or *mis*fortune as may be) to undergo very few conversions with regard to Music and its masters. I hope that I know more than I did —but I have not come to like what I disliked ten years ago, or the reverse.

Indeed, I suspect that those who limit their labours to a consideration of musical effects, will generally find this same instinct (not to call it prompt judgment) a safer guide than many dare admit. It is impossible to know a work thoroughly on a first hearing—on a first intercourse with an artist to perceive the extent of his merits: but unless the work produce from the first a quick desire for better acquaintance—unless the artist at first displays some attribute or accomplishment that attracts—it may be only a damage done to taste, and a loss of time, on subsequent occasions to attempt to find beauty where none suggested itself—or charm in that which failed to charm originally. Such attempts, however laudable on the score

of their patience and charity, are apt to end in the listener losing his discernment of good from evil,—in his confusing what is mediocre with what is great,—in his accepting pretensions on the terms of those advancing them, not according to the standard of artistic perfection. The spirit of over-strained conciliation is as dangerous as the spirit of arrogant condemnation. When scientific analysis is the task in hand, another process is, of course, demanded. Then qualities must be weighed — then exceptions must be allowed for, which are beyond the cognizance and the province of the general listener. Then motives and technical excellencies may be estimated, with reference to their intrinsic ingenuity, and not to their immediate results. My book is not one for the scholar, but for the listener—not for the professor, so much as for the general public.

The distinction just drawn will account, too, for its form. Having confined myself to the consideration of musical effects, it was fair that my readers should form some idea of the time,

place, and society, in the midst of which such effects were made—be able to judge of the humour and temperament of the person professing to sit in judgment. I have, therefore, not altered the framework in which my former recollections and criticisms were set, but have added a few sketches of life, manners, scenery, in their natural order, to introduce the unfamiliar recollections and criticisms with some reality.—There is another apology which might be offered. I might say that I could not be totally silent concerning the happiest days and freshest enjoyments of my life, in a work which attempts to collect and exhibit their fruits; but if the matter be in itself irrelevant, discordant, or frivolous, I ought not to expect patience with what may be rejected as merely so much sentimental and superfluous egotism.

London, March 1854.

CONTENTS.

A NORTH GERMAN FESTIVAL.

BRUNSWICK IN 1839.

		Page
CHAP. I.	—The Journey and the Rehearsal . . .	1
II.	—First Day. The Oratorio—the Dinner .	17
III.	—Second Day. The Oratorio—the Ball. .	36
IV.	—Third Day. Mendelssohn's Concert—the Opera	48

IN THE HARZ—1839.

CHAP. I.	—A Night on the Brocken	73
II.	—Rübeland	103
III.	—The Ross-Trappe	126

GLIMPSES OF BERLIN IN 1839-40.

		Page
CHAP. I.	—First Impressions—"Der Freischütz"	137
II.	—The Court and the Opera	163
III.	—"Comic Opera" in Berlin	207
IV.	—Quartetts and Amateurs.—1839	227
V.	—The "Huldigung" at Berlin.—1840	245
VI.	—The Theatre at Berlin from 1840 to 1848	280

GLIMPSES AT DRESDEN IN 1839-40.

CHAP. I.	—The Opera and its Environs—1839	291
II.	—Organ-Playing—1840	320
III.	—The Opera from 1840 to 1848	341

CONTENTS.

WEIMAR AND LEIPSIC.

	Page
Weimar in 1840	1
Chap. I.—Leipsic in 1839-40. The Concerts . .	17
II.—Traces of Bach	38
III.—Musical Journalism	63

DR. SPOHR'S MUSIC.

A Criticism	77

A GLANCE AT VIENNA.

Chap. I.—Traditions of Vienna	99
II.—Down the Danube	110

Page

III.—Autumn Music and Dancing . . . 132

IV.—The Leopoldstadt Theatre and Mozart . 156

V.—Austrian Influences on Art 172

VI.—Schubert and his Music 191

MUSIC IN THE RHINE LAND.

CHAP. I.—Rhine Scenery 211

II.—The Opera at Frankfort, 1844. Cherubini's "Medea" 219

III.—The Beethoven Festival at Bonn, 1845. . 241

IV.—Beethoven's Music at Bonn . . . 276

V.—Beethoven as an Influence 291

VI.—Music at Liege and Cologne, 1846 . . 320

VII.—Mademoiselle Lind in Opera . . . 351

THE LAST DAYS OF MENDELSSOHN.

THE LAST DAYS OF MENDELSSOHN 383

A

NORTH GERMAN FESTIVAL.

BRUNSWICK IN 1839.

A

NORTH GERMAN FESTIVAL.

BRUNSWICK IN 1839.

CHAPTER I.

THE JOURNEY AND THE REHEARSAL.

Hamburg to Haarburg—Steam-boat groups—German good nature—Haarburg to Soltau—Bookcase at Soltau—Celle—Brunswick—Its picturesque features—The Blue Angel—The Egydien Kirche—Beethoven's Symphony in C minor—A word to our own festival committees—Diligence of the orchestra——Dr. Mendelssohn Bartholdy—Care in rehearsal.

THE most hardened of travellers must find the first half-hour of a solitary journey in a strange country a trifle dreary. If even, moreover, the banks of the Elbe betwixt Hamburg and Haarburg rivalled those of the same river above Dresden in beauty and variety, they must have looked dismal on the fourth of September 1839, after a

night's storm, which had scattered all the first yellow leaves of the linden trees on the Jungfernstieg, and under clouds hanging low, which presently discharged themselves in a dense chill rain. The deck of the steamer was made untenable by a drove of horses on their way from the Lubeck fair to Italy. The little close cabin reeked with tobacco-smoke. I had before me a day and a night's journey through this forbidding weather, across the dreariest country conceivable, with only Patience and Pantomime to stand for my purveyors and interpreters. "What a fool have I been," said I, "ever to think of this Musical Festival at Brunswick!"

But the people of North Germany have a good-natured way with them, which must put the most pertinacious feelings of strangeness and solitude to flight in a wonderfully short time. When the tobacco wreaths parted in the cabin, a group or two were revealed worth studying. One was made up of a youth and two damsels; the latter travelling through that raw atmosphere with their bare arms undefended, save by the long brown kid gloves of our great-grandmothers—good-humoured sprightly girls, blessed by Heaven with miscellaneous appetites.

Their cavalier, who was making love to one or both of them, was yet more noticeable. His gay and daintily-braided tobacco-pouch slung round his neck, his exuberant travelling cap, his waistcoat, which had been of many colours, his trowsers, shapeless enough to make a stranger inclined to doubt whether *schneider* be, indeed, a German word, his huge, square seal-ring on the least clean of forefingers — not to forget the thousand smirks and smiles and fondlings lavished on the objects of his care—composed a whole characteristic, and worthy of note, though insignificant when compared with others of his sex and age to be encountered in those days.—An interest of different quality attached itself to a party of fair and stately girls with their mother, all in deep mourning, and attended by a young gentleman, whose good French, and better manners, belonged, as might have been guessed, to a good name also.—Further, to make me feel at home, all travelling difficulties were presently brought to an end in the best of all possible fashions, by my happy fortune in lighting upon an excellent and sociable Strasburgher, who wished to avoid the then slow and circuitous route of the public conveyance by Lunenburg, and who, being bound for

Hanover, proposed that we should join company in a *wagon*, and post together as far as Celle, within two or three stages of Brunswick.

The day kept the promise of the morning, and the gray spongy sky, and the incessant rain, made the damp and barren moors between Haarburg and Celle appear doubly desolate. The very heather on them looks starved and wretched; the trees crouch as if they had hardly the heart to grow. The few people to be seen seemed uncouth and squalid. We were detained early in the last stage before reaching Soltau by the loss of a horse's shoe; and, while we were waiting for the return of the postillion, who had gone back to the post-house, forth issued from a miserable sod-hut by the wayside, a couple of girls, hooting and screaming,—as unkempt, as dirty, as haggard, as were ever two savages; the long loops of black riband which hung from the country caps they wore streaming wildly in the wind.—Evening was closing in when we reached Soltau. Here that domestic curse, "a great wash" of an enormous stock of linen, busily directed by the daisy-faced landlady, was filling the post-house with soapy steam—no pleasant atmosphere to breathe

on such an afternoon. To crown all, the *Maritornes* in attendance, an ill-grown, slip-shod girl, was entirely driven to her wits' end by the arrival of the young Count and the ladies who had been on the boat that morning. While she clattered to and fro, retarding, instead of preparing, dinner, I was struck by a neat satin-wood bookcase at the end of the room; and on examination, found it to contain a handsomely-bound collection, of the best German classics—Göthe, Schiller, Herder, Jean Paul, Novalis, and even Schelling; and the works of Byron, Shakspeare and Irving, in the original English. Coarse prints, too, of the three Georges of England and Queen Charlotte were hanging on the walls; with one or two such large engravings of the death of Nelson, and of the encounters between the British and the French fleets, as still ornament the guest-chambers of our country houses. But a cookery book would have been more to the purpose than these refinements. When, at last, dinner made its appearance, the soup might have been furnished by the wash-tub, and the *piece de resistance* proved to be a block of pork, terribly salted, and liberally larded, with preserved cherries to help it down—a dish defying

even appetites which had been quickened by that penurious thing, a German inn breakfast, and a long raw morning spent on the wastes of Hanover.

It was not till long after midnight that we rattled into Celle, the head-quarters (so the guide-books say) of the pure German language. The town was dead asleep. Not a solitary roamer was in the streets; not a solitary taper winked from a high window. But there is an air of formal and faded stateliness in the streets of Celle, and in the large lofty chambers and wide staircase of the hotel, which we at last succeeded in forcing open, that called up visions of phlegmatic Electors and stiff Electresses on their progresses and parades, such as may be found painted in Dr. Moore's travels. After extorting a cup of coffee from the blinking waiter, though sorry to shake hands and part from my Strasburg friend, I was glad to be shut up again in my *wagon*, and to be dozing and jolting my way towards Brunswick. Thanks to the excellent posting regulations adopted throughout the whole of North Germany, a child of five years old, who knew not a word of the language, might, in 1839, have

crossed the country from Hamburg to Cologne with small risk of being cheated, and with the certainty of not being delayed.

We reached Brunswick by half-past eight in the morning. A brighter, more encouraging day never dawned. The sun glittered on the spotlessly bright window-panes of that ancient comfortable town, which was already astir with preparations for the Festival. My travelling friend had recommended me to take up my quarters at the "Blue Angel;" and thither I drove accordingly. There are larger hotels in the town—there can be none in any town more civilly kept. While I was alighting, the waiter apologized for the absence of the landlord, who was gone to the rehearsal of "Paulus;" and while he set on the table capital coffee, bread, and eggs, for breakfast, made me good-naturedly *au fait* in all the politics of the "Musik-Feste." By the time that my pen and ink were unpacked, I felt as if I had been in Brunswick a week at the very least. I do not add in a grumbling spirit, that it required North German heartiness to make up for the discomforts of North German lodgment, — to compensate for the box, by way of bed, in which the victim was expected

to sleep,—for the ball of feathers, which *would not* cover him, in lieu of sheets, blankets, and counterpane,—for the noisy uncarpeted floor, and the grievously scanty provision of water in his pie-dish and phial—not basin and jug—but truth is truth.

A walk after breakfast increased my admiration for the cleanliness and quaintly picturesque architecture of Brunswick. To be sure, one's first old town in Germany is much like the first figure one eyes when first setting foot on Calais pier, who looks inviting and pleasant, be she even a *poissarde*, coarse, and old, and wrinkled. But, inexperience and charity apart, there are beautiful things in Brunswick: among others, its richly decorated *Rathhaus*, with those corrupt ornaments and that heavy pyramidal gable, that seem to be proper to buildings of its order: a few cloister-like arches of the richest Gothic, in the opposite corner of the place where it stands; and close to the Cathedral a bronze lion of Byzantine antiquity. The human beings, too, who looked out at the shop doors, or streamed along the streets, in *such* equipages! were singularly comely and prosperous-looking. A few hours' further experience convinced me

of their civility and hospitality. In all that concerned the official arrangements of the Festival, in a desire to accomodate all classes, from The Duke down to his meanest subject, and in patient attention to the comfort of the most obscure stranger, I must insist that the gentlemen of the committee were a model, which might with advantage be imitated at our own provincial entertainments of a similar kind; where a shred of white ribbon at the button-hole, and a wand in the hand, were too often signs that the wearer fancied himself licensed to be discourteous, neglectful, and overbearing.

I was lying in the sunshine, after the one o'clock *table d'hôte*, feverish and sleepy, lazily calling up past festivals and distant faces, when the thread of my musings was cut short by the entrance of a clean civil little boy, with a message from Dr. Mendelssohn, who was then in the Egydien Kirche, superintending the rehearsal. We were there ere I was well awake. The church is but the fragment of a large Gothic building, which has been sorely despoiled of much of its old ornaments by time or violence; and its one good point, height, renders it ineligible for musical purposes. Even then,

though it was late in the afternoon, and the rehearsal had been going on with small intermission since the morning, it was three parts full. I arrived in the midst of Beethoven's C minor Symphony, just a few bars before the commencement of its glorious final march. Had I desired a moment of the strongest possible sensation on first making acquaintance with a German orchestra, it could not have been more completely granted.

The performance fell far short of what it would have been by Dr. Mendelssohn's own band at Leipsic. At these German musical festivals, as was formerly the case at our English ones, the orchestra is compounded of unequal materials, being assisted by many persons unused to practise together. Here, too, it was largely amateur. But the effect of the music nevertheless was overcoming. The glory of the Symphony was heightened by the lofty arches and long-drawn aisles through which it resounded; and when the thrill and the mustering of blood to the heart, which so few things excite when early youth is passed, had subsided, I could not but wistfully ask myself, why such noble works are not also selected to form a part of the morning per-

formances at our Musical Festivals, instead of being there thrust into the schemes of Concerts five hours long, when all the provincial world is waiting to hear the newest Italian airs and cadences from the *prima donna* of the hour.

This proposal to introduce great orchestral music into sacred performances is worth examining. There are works by all the great masters, so decidedly secular in tone, as to jar unpleasantly upon the mind on such occasions. Perhaps the only three of Beethoven's Symphonies eligible would be the one mentioned, the *Eroica*, with its grave and holy "Funeral March," and the Choral Symphony. Beethoven's other Symphonies, besides being too secular in character, are too delicate in detail, to bear being rendered by a very large orchestra, in which, to balance the stringed instruments, the wind-instruments would have to be doubled. That the master, in composing, had an eye to such gradation, may be clearly seen, on comparing, for instance, his overture to "Leonora," with that in C major, Op. 124, the "Fest. Overture," which, being apparently written for an enormous band, was, till lately, all but unknown in England. As regards the profanity of mere instrumental

music, as opposed to the sanctity of the "Messiah," or of Spohr's "Last Judgment," let no one deceive himself. Our Musical Festivals are not direct acts of devotion because they are performances of holy words set to befitting music, and are often held in churches. There are few that defend them on such grounds who would not recoil from the notion that they are worshipping, when they sit in silence before the *Madonna di San Sisto* of the Dresden Gallery, or when they enter the stately cathedral at Antwerp to admire the great pictures Rubens has left there. And yet the two acts are precisely identical in character. It is not the mere adoption of the text of Scripture by the musician — it is not the selection of Saints and Angels by the painter — that make works of art operate with a hallowing influence upon our vexed and worldly spirits. It is that the high thoughts which the artist has brought to his task awaken in us those better and more spiritual aspirings, which are too often stifled in the heavy sleep of self-indulgence, or the harsh tumult of money-getting, or the dissipating frivolity of society.

In its performance of Beethoven's Symphony, the orchestra was hardly as exact as it might

have been. But the earnestness and anxiety of its members, who betook themselves to their tasks—one heedless if he see-sawed over his violoncello as oddly as Dr. Johnson—another, if he rasped the very hair off his head—a third, if, like the bassoon player in "Bracebridge Hall," he "blew his face to a point,"—made a sight at once new and, though amusing, calculated to disarm ridicule. Indeed, that sense of the whimsical and grotesque, which is so invaluable as a travelling companion to solitary persons, of necessity becomes far less sardonic in Germany than elsewhere. Every eye was fixed fast upon the Conductor, with a submissiveness and an admiration which must have had their reciprocal effect in inspiring him to go through his fatiguing duties without flagging or impatience: and Dr. Mendelssohn's conducting at rehearsal, though easy in appearance, and, therefore, any thing but distracting to the eye, was the strictest in spirit of any that I had then witnessed.

After the Symphony, a weak and tame *contralto* singer, with a profusion of fair ringlets, went through the delicious *arioso* in "St. Paul," "But the Lord is mindful of his own":

and then the Conductor, hitherto a personal stranger, came down to me, and gave me a friendly welcome to Germany.

It is sad now to recall the inquiries after mutual friends, the quick interchange of a musical piece of news or two, and the unexpected joke (for a joke there was, I remember), amongst which began an acquaintance soon to be ripened into indulgent friendship on the one side, and faithful regard on the other. There was this inexpressible comfort in all intercourse with Mendelssohn, that he made no secret of his likings and dislikings. Few men so distinguished have been so simple, so cordial, so considerate; but few have been so innocent of courtiership, positive or negative. One might be sure that a welcome from him was a welcome indeed.

I thought then, as I do now, his face one of the most beautiful which has ever been seen. No portrait extant does it justice. A Titian would have generalized, and, out of its many expressions, made up one which, in some sort, should reflect the many characteristics and humours of the Poet—his earnest seriousness—his child-like truthfulness—his clear, cultivated intellect—his impulsive vivacity. The German painters

could only invest a theatrical, thoughtful-looking man with that serious cloak which plays so important a part on the stage, and in the portraits of their country; and conceive the task accomplished, when it was not so much as begun. None of them has perpetuated the face with which Mendelssohn listened to the music in which he delighted, or the face with which he would crave to be told again some merry story, though he knew it already by heart. I felt in that first half-hour, that in him there was no stilted sentiment — no affected heartiness; that he was no sayer of deep things, no searcher for witty ones; but one of a pure, sincere intelligence — bright, eager, and happy, even when most imaginative.—Perhaps there was no contemporary at once strong, simple, and subtle enough, to paint such a man with such a countenance.

The rehearsal proceeded.—A psalm by Schneider was gone through, the "Hallelujah chorus" from the Messiah, and Weber's "Jubilee Overture:"—all practised with care and intelligence, not rattled over as a task. The painful conviction, that nine-tenths of the orchestra feels itself employed in manufacturing music, which is so constantly forced upon the listener at English

rehearsals, could never be entertained here for one single moment.

The audience remained attentive and numerous till the last chord, and then dispersed in happy anticipation of the morrow; Dr. Mendelssohn, to be serenaded by the young men of the town with some of the part-songs, which make up so peculiar a feature in German vocal music.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST DAY.

THE ORATORIO—THE DINNER.

Early hours in Brunswick—Primitive equipages—A retrospect of a Dublin festival with Paganini—Contrasts in costume, with a note upon costumes at home—Honours to Dr. Mendelssohn—The popularity of "St. Paul" compared with that of Spohr's "Last Judgment"—Its freedom from manner—Its dramatic effects—Its four great songs—The performance compared with English performances—The singers—Madame Fischer-Achten—Herr Fischer—Herr Schmetzer—The reception of "St. Paul"—German and English modesty—The dinner—The decorations—Impudent Englishman—The cookery—The musical honours—„Dankes-Gruß"—A straightforward dialogue—The climax and close of the feast.

By six o'clock A.M. on the first morning of the Festival, there was no possibility of sleeping in Brunswick. Not only was the entire "Blue Angel" stirring and clamorous for its breakfast—the whole town was blithely alive. In every

room of the opposite four-story house, which seemed nodding into my little light chamber, the work of adorning was busily going on:—in one window, the first flourish of the razor; in another, the last shoulder-knot pinned on, or the sash tied. But neither gentlemen nor ladies denied themselves the pleasure of throwing wide the casements, and leaning out into the fresh autumnal sunshine, so often as the frequent sound of creaking springs and jingling wheels, the leisurely trot of horses, or the eager bawling of their drivers, announced that another cargo of pleasurers was coming in to enjoy the execution of Mendelssohn's "St. Paul."

The equipages were things to admire. The old Irish postchaise, out of which, upon its being rolled from the coach-house, three hens flew, leaving an egg behind them, would have figured as a vehicle of worship among some of the machines which deposited their full freight beneath my windows. German *wagons*, of an older date than the Electors and Electresses whom I did *not* see at Celle; horses reminding one of Mrs. Butler's picture of the Pennsylvanian charger, more "like an old hair trunk" worn bare, than a creature to mount or to drive; harness cracked

with neglect, and brown with age ; Jehus in cockades, top-boots, laced hats, livery coats, earrings, and heterogeneously coloured cotton handkerchiefs, stuck on as each individual wearer judged best,—I shall never forget the scene, so primitive, so bustling, so cheerful. A temporary lull took place between seven and eight, when the world might be supposed to be at breakfast. By nine, every one was streaming towards the Egydien Kirche, which, even at that hour, was three parts full.

I have assisted at many provincial Musical Festivals at home. In particular, I remember, as curious and characteristic, the Dublin meeting held in the year 1831. At this the morning performances took place in the artificially-lighted theatre, the boxes of which were filled with a remarkable display of beauty, while the galleries overflowed with a dirty, half-clad audience, which, after its peculiar fashion, made no scruple of cracking jokes at the performers as they presented themselves. Who that was present can forget its shrieks of delight when Paganini glided from the cloak, which, like a cloud, enveloped him at the side scenes, to play his *Rondo colla campanella* between the acts of the

concert? and how, for a more distinct view of his wizard figure, the people compelled him to mount the pianoforte—a proceeding so much to their tastes, that on Braham coming next to sing "The Bay of Biscay," the "gods" insisted upon his doing the same, and all but exacted a similar compliance from gentle Madame Stockhausen in her turn? That was a scene as lively, as full of contrast as the English heart can desire; yet more gaily various as a sight was the audience in the Egydien Kirche at Brunswick. Elegantly dressed girls in the transparent and gay toilettes of an English ball-room, might be seen, sitting side by side with the gipsy-coloured, hard-handed peasant women of the district, in their black caps gracefully displaying the head and picturesquely decorated with pendant streamers of ribbon. Here, again, was a comely youth, tight-laced in his neat uniform, and every hair of his moustache trimmed and trained to an agony of perfection, squeezed up against a dirty, savage, half-naked student, with his long, wild hair half way down his back, and his velveteen coat, confined at the waist with one solitary button, letting it be clearly seen that neither waistcoat nor shirt was underneath. The or-

chestra, on the other hand, had an effective appearance of uniformity. The lady-singers, though all serving gratuitously, both amateurs and theatrical artists, had wisely agreed to merge all individual fancies in an inexpensive, but delicate and pretty uniform of white, with a large nosegay by way of ornament.* The whole assembly of orchestra and audience, thus heterogeneously composed, was cemented by one sympathetic desire to honour a great musician; and this was as strongly, if not as vivaciously expressed, as in the curiosity to have out "the man who played on the one string" testified by the boys and girls of the Dublin gallery. All eyes waited Mendelssohn's—not The Duke's—coming. His conductor's desk was wreathed with a fresh gar-

* Our sturdy national disposition to resist the slightest control in matters of taste used to tell oddly, on occasions like these, in this same matter of costume. I remember, at the last rehearsal of "Acis and Galatea," given by one of our provincial choral societies some twenty years ago, overhearing one young lady of the choir, while discussing the delicate matter of her *coiffure*, say to her neighbour, "Ringlets is out; I shall go Fanny Kemble-wise." When the evening arrived, the *Galatea*, who was terribly thin, and spectacled—aged fifty or thereabouts—presented herself in a triumphant scarlet hat; only one among a group of figures similarly ridiculous, whose ill-considered and not-to-be-overruled tawdriness turned a really fine performance into a broad farce.

land of flowers. Upon it, beside the score of his Oratorio, was laid another more delicate *bouquet* ready for his use, and, if I mistake not, for his refreshment, a paper cornucopia of those dainties in which every good German housewife is so skilful. We should laugh at these *petits soins* in London. At Brunswick they were pretty, because hearty and natural.

Precisely at ten o'clock the performance began. I had heard the oratorio of "St. Paul" two or three times before, but had never thoroughly enjoyed it till then. There was much, of course, in time, place, and sympathy. What caviller against German crudity and mysticism could have resisted the "Euryanthe," conducted by Weber at Vienna?—and I should feel small patience with the most conscientious and intellectual contemner of Italian meretriciousness who at Venice could remain cold to the "Semiramide" of Rossini, performed under the auspices of *Il Maestro* himself! But, allowing for these influences as largely as may be required, there is little modern music which gains so much with every subsequent hearing as that of the "St. Paul." How forcible in their simple truth are its effects! How thrillingly expressed by the multiplication

of treble voices and wind instruments, is the celestial apparition in the scene of Saul's conversion! How ferociously real are the cries of the multitude at the stoning of St. Stephen! How melodious, in its sweet holiness of consolation, is the funeral chorus, "O happy and blest are they," when the proto-martyr is laid in his grave! There is a little design in *chiaro-scuro*, by Martin, of the burial of Sarah in the cave of Macpelah—the deep shadows and struggling lights of which, around the group of mourners bending reverentially over the dust of the departed, never fail to come back to me upon the deliciously undulating accompaniment, and the grave but soothing chant of the voices of that chorus. Nor less dramatically has the composer thrown himself into the hymn of adoration given to the heathen, when, astounded by the miraculous powers of the Apostles, "they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercurius; and the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people." The frieze of some Grecian temple, with its choral dancers, and its flower-decked altar, is not further in character from some "Pieta," or

martyrdom of Christian art, than the delicious strain, "O be gracious, ye immortals," from the funeral anthem just mentioned, or from that serenely exulting strain of hope, "How lovely are the messengers!"

In adverting to some of the claims of "St. Paul" on the future, the scope it gives to the principal singers must not be forgotten. Though it affords less opportunity for separate display than most of Handel's oratorios, it still contains a song of the very highest order, for each voice of the vocal quartett—for the *soprano*, the air "Jerusalem;" for the *contralto*, that delicious *arioso*, "But the Lord is mindful of his own;" for the *basso*, the scene, "O God, have mercy upon me;" and for the tenor the *cantabile*, "Be thou faithful unto death!" than which Handel himself has hardly left us a tenor air deeper or more earnest in its expressiveness. Every song, moreover, is not only tempting to declaim, but agreeable to sing. From the date of the composition of this oratorio till the last hour of his life, Mendelssohn was increasingly anxious to produce effect by the ease, beauty, and practicability of his vocal writing. The above four songs were the work of happy hours; and their

success may have contributed to that mellowing of his style, and simplification of his manner, which may be traced through the works of his short life.—But this is anticipating.

In some respects the performance of "St. Paul" must have satisfied its author. The chorus was extremely good, clear in the delivery of its tone, and its precision to be inferred from the tremendous sibilation on certain words—to an amount of *ssssss-sforzando*, rarely, in 1839, to be remarked at home, even in the performance of the choruses, "For unto *us* a child is born," or, "From the cen*s*er,"—both favourites with English chorus-singers, both full of the dangerous sound. It was a great relief to be delivered from male counter-tenors, the quartett gaining by the substitution of *contralti*, which indeed are stronger upon the characteristic notes—the deepest—of their part, while the highest are attained without that nasality and effort which all men (Rubini perhaps excepted) must use, when in *falsetto* approaching the *soprano* register. On the other hand, the absence of an organ to support and blend the voices, was as great a loss as the substitution just praised was a gain. In the fugue at the opening of the second part, and in

most of the choruses, this was sadly felt. It is one of the few English indispensables which the Germans would do well to naturalize, and for the want of which, in grand sacred music, not even the superiority of their orchestras, nor the heartiness of zeal, such as characterized every chord of the Brunswick chorus, can altogether satisfactorily compensate.

The *solo* exhibitions were, as usual, the least admirable part of the performance. Yet in these, too, might be praised a steadiness and a self-sacrifice eminently commendable to English imitation. No drawling of the time was there—no neglect in speaking the text—no long-drawn displays of a single note esteemed particularly exquisite in its height or depth — no cadences or trills whatsover. Indeed, my ear sometimes missed the shake, which, judiciously applied, gives a grace without frivolity to all sacred music. On the other hand, the singers, if more correct, were harder and less finished, than ours. Madame Fischer-Achten, with her clear and satisfactory *soprano* voice, was cold and unfeeling. The principal *contralto* was weak and tame,* making

* The utter absence of good *contralto* voices in Germany had not been forced upon me by experience in 1839; but the fact may

nothing whatsoever of her song. Still drier and less expressive was Herr Fischer, the bass singer of the Oratorio. I was defending his artistic simplicity and exactness to Mendelssohn, who answered—"Yes, but I would willingly compound with any of your English flourishes, if he would but give the song as much feeling and elevation as Phillips!" What could be urged in reply? If the taste of the German public had, towards 1839, unduly taken the direction of "Italian sing-song" (to adopt Herr Von Raumer's contemptuous appellation), one cause might be, the want among German artists of southern vocal cultivation, as well as the predilection for southern *roulades* and *cantilenas*. Even Herr Schmetzer, the tenor, the best of the Brunswick party, and whose fine voice was shown to great advantage by the music, was coarse and unfinished in comparison with more than one of our own tenors, Braham being put out of the question. Yet I was

be stated without much fear of contradiction, or a single distinguished exception to the rule being named. Indeed, the almost universal avoidance of the voice as a *solo* by every composer earlier than Mendelssohn may be cited in confirmation of my assertion. The best specimens are *mezzo-soprani*, forced downward;—becoming cavernous, weak, and husky, below C sharp, and in general quality wanting richness and resonance.—1852.

told, by Mendelssohn that the great songs of the "St. Paul" had not hitherto been better executed in Germany.

I was a little disappointed with the audience. Though noiselessly attentive, it was not quite so warm as one might have fancied a German audience should be. Applause, of course, there was none; but neither was there ever that deep and universal murmur, as of the wind sweeping a corn-field, which may be heard at our Oratorios in England, when any passage of peculiar beauty has stirred the whole multitude. The Duke, for whom an arm-chair at the top of the chancel steps had been arranged throne-wise, came and went without exciting any sensation. Between the first and second acts the ladies and gentlemen were far too busy, interchanging smiles and civilities, and partaking of the thousand good things with which every one had come prepared, to have eyes or attentions for any one;—and, having followed Mendelssohn out of the orchestra with an eager eye of respect, they began to stay their appetites as zealously as if one o'clock had not been the usual dinner hour, and three the time appointed for the state banquet to be held that day in honour of the composer.

The dispersion of the audience, when all was over, was as amusing as its gathering had been. My countrywomen are heroines in crowds when compared with the blooming, fearful-looking damsels of North Germany; who, again, are more willing to be openly tended and comforted by their cavaliers, than with us would be thought maidenly. Some of the elder folks were still more precious. I watched one capital ancient couple, eminent for their ponderosity, as, face to face and hand-in-hand—the lady cleaving her track through the crowd by a steady pressure rear-foremost—they squeezed their way along, smiling as languishingly on each other as if they had been a pair of lovers.—Without the church the scene was very gay. The same wonderful equipages as I had seen in the morning, were here, there, and everywhere, departing, packed full of the songstresses and the female part of the audience, bareheaded, smiling, yet, in spite of such a liberal display, as free from coquetry as from awkwardness.

The great object of attraction was now The Dinner—how to get a good place to eat, to see, and to hear; and all the prudent hastened at once from the church to the Vauxhall saloon with this object. After a few ineffectual attempts to gain entrance at the great door, the scullery was charged by the anxious multitude; and we made our way in—gentlemen and ladies equally eager—through a legion of astonished cooks, who were busy over troughs so plentifully heaped with coarse vegetables as to threaten rather than promise for the future. The hall was arranged with three rows of long tables—the centre seats of the centre one being destined for the principal guest and the committee. A long range of windows displayed Dr. Mendelssohn's name in transparent letters. His portrait was suspended in the midst of a bower of evergreens; and the room was hung with garlands, in which, besides autumn flowers, there were so many strong-smelling herbs, that a country apothecary's laboratory has hardly a more medicinal atmosphere. Taste is not the same thing in Brunswick as in Dresden; and the hall would have been better for some of the notable old garland-weavers who used to ply

their trade before Tieck's door, in the Altmarkt of the Saxon capital, making up wreaths and chaplets of a richness and elegance which would bring a fortune in Covent Garden. By three o'clock, candles and chandeliers were lighted; and when I returned to take my seat, the principal places were occupied by gentlemen and ladies in full dress,—the latter looking none the less strange for the mixture of autumn sunlight and artificial glare by which their cheerful faces and gay clothes were displayed.

My lot cast me into a small ante-room, commanding the whole hall, and eligible, therefore, for a looker-on. Other circumstances in my position were less agreeable. I was too near one of my countrymen; and, having already received much civility from entire strangers on whom I had no claim whatsoever, it was intolerable to be attacked by him with a coarse and personal remark upon the ladies of the party close opposite to us at table. How the young travelling Englishman is endured in Germany, I often wondered; and as often was humbled by receiving heart-warm kindness and hospitality, when I remembered how little it is felt, if even not grossly recompensed, by many of my

age and condition calling themselves gentlemen! It was necessary, openly and aloud, to put an entire stop to my neighbour's communications; but, till the end of the dinner, the man never ceased wrangling with the waiters, abusing the food set before him, and imprudently thrusting himself upon those he had commented on, with a noisy audacity which one would have been ashamed to encounter in the travellers' room of a second-rate English inn, after the third round of brandy-and-water.

Truth to say, the viands were detestable, and as badly served as at our most parsimonious charity-dinner. Even *Mr. Dulcimer's* politeness could have found nothing to praise in the messes of stale veal with *haricots* as dry as acorns, and of greasy purple cabbage garnished with fat bacon, which those ample troughs had yielded! Three mortal hours were the dishes in procession. At the end of the third course the composer's health was drunk with musical honours —the first of many such jovial transactions— and there was time enough between the *entrées* for gentlemen to go and pay visits to their friends; while those who kept their seats did all but break their glasses with their knives, in the

energy of their impatient summonses to the weary, perspiring waiters, who toiled here and there—saluted by a fresh volley of objurgation at every new dainty exhibited. The principal musical illustration of the feast was cunningly presented between a black unwholesome *bouilli*, which, from its appearance, might have been any strange flesh whatsoever, and Falstaff's favourite dish, "a mess of stewed prawns," rejected unanimously by every nose in company. This was a complimentary *piece d'occasion* in three verses.

Dankes-Gruß
dem
Herrn
Dr. Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

The applause with which it was received was ear-splitting, and the music was as good as such music is generally.—Like my neighbours, I had left my seat, and approached as near the central table as was possible, to hear this laudatory effusion; when I found myself stopped and accosted, by a good-natured-looking middle-aged soul, in a black velveteen coat, who, *sans* ceremony, asked me "if I would tell him where I came from"; then, what my name was; and next,

what was my age! There was nothing for it but, in reply, to inquire if he wished to see my passport. "No!" was his answer, with a very hearty laugh, in which the bystanders joined; our dialogue being carried on in a most edifying mixture of tongues. Then he asked me whether I did not know Dr. Mendelssohn — whether (making signs the while, as if he had a pen in his hand) I was not "a *litteraire*." . . . . I thought all this sufficiently familiar, but least troublesomely despatched by a "Yes," on which he warmly shook hands with me, and went away. I afterwards saw this gentleman often, and heard his name. He never addressed me again. Every one seemed to know him; but no one could or would tell me his calling; so that whether it was a piece of Brunswick good-nature, Brunswick impudence, Brunswick journalism, or Brunswick police (I was helped to all these solutions by my German friends), I know not to this day.

By degrees the hubbub became unbearable. One table-song succeeded another; and there were some little bands of singers, not engaged for the occasion, who, like Goldsmith's gentlemen at the "Free and Easy," were willing to

make their voices heard, even in singing to a plate trundling on its edges, rather than keep still; and who kept breaking out, in four parts, in their own corners, in valiant contempt of the general harmony. Champagne bottles exploded so rapidly as to make a continuous *feu de joie*. Cigars were lighted by the score, and cries for "*eis*" (ice) resounded fast and furiously. How the guest, in honour of whom all this conviviality had been prepared, kept his hearing, I cannot tell,—when, as a climax, Schmetzer, the tenor, no light weight, was lifted upon the shoulders of some of the young fellows, and borne round the room with roars of Bacchanal triumph. For myself, long ere this mirthful consummation was reached, I was glad to exchange the atmosphere, which might have been helped with a spoon, for the glowing and calm freshness of a September evening.

CHAPTER III.

SECOND DAY.

THE ORATORIO—THE BALL.

Length of English and German entertainments—Bach and Mendelssohn—The Cathedral—Organ-playing—Honours to Mendelssohn—The German chorus-singer in London—The post-boy at Cologne—The Prussian Corporal—The Oratorio—False taste in the *programme*—German performance of Handel—The ball—A glance at a wake at Marksuhl—More honours to Mendelssohn—His coronation in the theatre—The ball.

In nothing is the difference between home and foreign arrangements more striking than in the quantity of entertainment deemed fashionable and sufficient. Talk of the English as lukewarm in the matter of public amusements! Where else shall we find audiences willing to be shut up in the strait seats of a theatre, or the cramping benches of an opera pit, from seven o'clock in

the evening till an hour past midnight? Where else, frames robust enough to endure, as at our provincial festivals, four hours of oratorio in the morning, and five hours of concert in the evening, with all the intermediate hurries and cares attendant on the pleasure?

I was sitting on the second morning revolving our incessant habits in my mind, and rejoicing in the rationality of a few hours' pause, when Dr. Mendelssohn kindly paid me a visit. There were some MSS. of Sebastian Bach to be inspected; there was to be organ-playing in the Cathedral: in short, it was to be one of those mornings of musical lounging and luxury, which, as regards real enjoyment of, and insight into, the art, are sometimes worth a score of formal performances. Once again the friendly hospitality must be dwelt upon which included in these choice pleasures a total stranger, without his being allowed for a single instant, to feel himself tolerated or *de trop*. If mine be a right impression of Brunswick, indeed, a more cheerful or agreeable residence could hardly be found in Germany, for any one willing to exchange the finer intellectual cultivation of other cities for the genial old-world usages which Fashion has not

laughed nor prosperity hardened out of the inhabitants of the place.

The Bach manuscripts did not turn out anything very extraordinary. It was interesting to hear Mendelssohn pronouncing on their authenticity with the certainty of a Beckford, when examining a Cellini carving or jewel; though for such a thorough-going intimacy one might have been prepared by the spirit which runs through the younger composer's harmonies, especially in his later works, and by the circumstance of his being one of the finest organ-players of his time.

The interior of the Cathedral in Brunswick is striking—striking from its antiquity, and the air of bleak, naked cheerlessness which, if the unpleasant truth be told, hardly ever fails to follow the steps of Lutheranism, when possessing itself of a Catholic building. Besides the relics which date back to the crusading days of Henry the Lion, and his statue; and besides the ivory horn and pipe of St. Blaize, the patron of the town; and besides the coffin of the hero who fell at Waterloo at the head of his black Brunswickers;—besides these objects of interest in the vaults, I say, the upper church has its curiosities, fine effigies, a quaint old seven-branched

candlestick on the altar, obviously Byzantine in date, and to be accepted readily as an authentic copy of the candlestick in the Temple of Jerusalem, by all who are not disposed to wrangle with Tradition. The organ-case, too, though dolefully worm-eaten and spoiled with white paint, is a fine piece of carving, of course a trifle less antique. The instrument was sadly out of order; but Mendelssohn made it speak most gloriously, winding up nearly an hour's magnificent playing by one of Bach's grand fugues. But the thing that comes the most vividly before me, in recalling that morning, is the expression of love and dutiful reverence on the faces of half a dozen urchins, who awaited the composer, cap in hand, at the foot of the gallery stairs. Nothing analogous to it is to be found in English admiration or French enthusiasm. It is pleasing to think that age does not necessarily destroy that look: one evidence of those feelings whereby man is made so much the worthier. Old faces are to be seen shining out in the obscure corners of German orchestras, even over such subordinate instruments as the drum, or the least wanted wind-instrument, on which the same homely but hearty attachment to their art and their occupa-

tion, and the same respect for any distinguished talent whom chance has sent among them, is to be as openly read as when their owners were fifteen. It was curious and interesting to catch a glimpse of like admiration which I once caught behind the scenes of a German opera in London, on an evening when chance brought a handful of distinguished instrumentalists just at the moment when the final chorus of "Der Freischutz" was sung. The bass or tenor at the end of the semi-circle was a huge coarse man, with *würst* and *sauer kraut* in every line of his face, and every square inch of his body; but when the names of —— and —— were pronounced, how his face lit up as he passed them on to his neighbour! The illumination lasted only a moment, but in it lay the secret of the success of the German chorus.

This interest in Music and Drama meets one in Germany under every variety of impersonation. I shall always connect the interesting approach from Aix to Cologne—the blue Siebengebirge rising like a cloud on the horizon to warn the pilgrim that he is approaching Father Rhine—with the honest good-humoured fellow who served as postilion when I last posted that

road in October 1840. A good-natured, frank, intelligent fellow he was—pointing out every object on the way; amongst other notable things, a carriage encountered not long before our coming in sight of the Byzantine peaks of St. Geryon's and the Apostles' churches. This, he said, contained the theatrical company; "and," he added, "I take great interest in them."—"Why so?" was the natural question. "Oh! I act myself; and I act very well."—"And what is it you act?"—It appeared that our friend was what in technical language is termed a supernumerary. "And did you ever wear a Roman dress?" asked ——. "No," was his answer, "but very often armour; and they generally make a herald of me, because I can blow the horn."

The very same evening, while ascending the Rhine, we stumbled upon a lover of art in one of yet sterner vocation. This was a magnificent-looking Prussian corporal, six feet high, and stalwart in proportion; his face ruddy with exposure to the weather, and its deep crimson setting off in vivid contrast the pale hair and moustaches with which it was plentifully garnished. He was a true military character, erect

and sententious—one who knew the world. He was bound from Cologne to a duck-supper at the *Kirmesse* of Bonn, where he was stationed, and was taking all a soldier's tender care (the race is good to children) of a little girl, as pretty a creature as I ever saw, whom a seat in Mendelssohn's britschka, and a handful of dried plums, exalted into a queen in her own estimation. Twenty years ago this brave fellow had taught one of our party the art of swimming; and after the honest and joyful recognition of master and pupil, who had never met in the interim, the Corporal began to tell all that he had since seen and heard. Nor was this the common soldier's story. He was a man of trust and function, and had been one of those entrusted with the delicate service of arresting the Archbishop of Cologne. The prelate, he said, when aware of his entrance and his errand, had simply said, "Do you smoke? I see you do; so do I. We shall not quarrel on our journey." On one of our party addressing the other by his name—"What!" he exclaimed, "the great pianist? I am glad to have seen him." And then it came out that the Corporal had his own taste in music, and he favoured us with his judgment upon "Il

Barbiere," which he had heard at Cologne the evening before, and did not much approve. "I have always read the papers carefully," said he, "to see what is good; so that by this time I think I ought to know something about the matter." The Corporal's connoisseurship and the postboy's dramatic skill and horn-playing might make up a very small amount of artistic qualification; but it is of the aggregate of such things that a nation's taste is composed.

Brunswick dined in the interval between the organ-playing and the commencement, at two o'clock, of the second morning's performance in the church. This last would hardly be accepted as sacred, according to the English acceptation of the word; for the *programme* ran thus:—

FIRST PART.

"Jubilee Overture" - - - -	*Weber.*
Adagio (violin), Herr Muller - -	*Spohr.*
Psalm - - - - - -	*Schneider.*

SECOND PART.

Concerto (clarionet), Herr Tretbar -	*Klein.*
Symphony, C minor - - - -	*Beethoven.*
"Hallelujah Chorus" (Messiah) -	*Handel.*

A selection comprising three master-works could hardly have been made less satisfactory than this. The two instrumental *solos*, though very well played, were sadly out of place, not only in a church, but with reference to the massive and dignified compositions among which they were set. Among these last, however, Schneider's psalm is not to be included, it being merely one of those correct and unmarked mediocrities which may, at times, become more antipathetic to the ear than compositions containing glaring faults or frivolities, but still characteristic. Nor could I be satisfied with the execution of Handel's "Hallelujah." Dignity, breadth, grandeur, mass of tone, seemed wanting. It was taken, moreover, too fast. But I have never heard Handel's music given in Germany, with the force, sublimity, and enjoyment, which in England are thrown into its execution.

The Egydien Kirche, as before, was crowded; the orchestra and chorus, as before, were sedulous and energetic. When the symphony of Beethoven was over, a *feu de joie* of splendid *bouquets*, carefully hidden up till then, was discharged upon the conductor by the ladies. But the climax of enthusiasm was yet to come.

This was reserved for the ball in the evening. Of all describable things a ball is one of the most indescribable on paper, unless it be a Paris *bal masqué*, which, indeed, has only too many remarkable features! or a people's ball, which may be a pretty thing. I shall not soon forget a picture I saw, a few weeks later, during a stoppage of the Schnellpost, between Leipsic and Frankfort, at Marksuhl, on the edge of the Thuringian forest, just as twilight was beginning to close in. The little market-place was gaily dressed out. Round the pine-tree in its centre, four smaller ones had been planted. In the midst, raised upon a platform, stood a fiddler and a fifer, playing *galoppe* tunes, in the true spirit, though the fiddle was cracked, and the fife asthmatic. A trombone or two had been laid by, that the musicians, too, might take a turn; and round and round, by that lessening light, were seen careering the entire population of the place: young men in linen frocks, with maidens in their flat country caps, little boys and girls, and tougher older people than are ever to be found on the floor with us, save, perhaps, on a holiday eve in South Wales; the whole party performing their evolutions with an ease, a smoothness, and

an absence of rudeness or riot, delightful to see. They had still some hours of waltz in them! Presently, from among the bystanders, a good-natured man detached himself, and offered to all the *Schnellpost* strangers round a glass of beer from the patriarchal bottle beside him; nor would partners have been wanting, had time and travel allowed any of us to join the maze. But this is a too long digression from the apotheosis of Mendelssohn, which made the ball that closed the Brunswick Festival not only delightful, but describable.

The scene of this festive ceremony was the theatre, which had been gaily decorated for the occasion, though not sufficiently lighted. A suite of rooms had been temporarily added for supper. At the furthest depth of the stage, a stately pavilion, draperied with white, had been erected. This was at first concealed by the curtain, which was kept down till the right moment—the arrival of the composer. When he entered the theatre, according to preconcerted signal, he was met by two young girls, who led him gently forward — the curtain meanwhile slowly rising—to this shrine of honour. Six other young ladies, dressed as *genii*, there awaited

him; and, after a brief address from one of them, a laurel crown was placed on his head.

In other respects, the ball was a mere ball—as I have said, indescribable. Pretty faces, and fresh toilettes, by the hundred; gay and gallant youths, only a little more hairy-visaged and tender than with us at home; a good band playing excellent waltz music; the Duke in his box for a part of the evening; a liberal and plenteous supper; and an English lady standing upright in the midst of the easy, blithe-faced multitude, and declaring, the while she fanned herself with an air of satisfied dignity, that "the company really behaved very well;"—this is all that is to be told concerning the Festival Ball at Brunswick in 1839.

CHAPTER IV.

THIRD DAY.

MENDELSSOHN'S CONCERT—THE OPERA.

Programme of the concert—Schmetzer's singing—Muller's violin-playing—Molique's *concertos*—Mendelssohn's pianoforte playing compared with that of Moscheles, Chopin, Liszt—His fancy—The end of the concert—A general remark or two on North German Festivals—The Schwerin Festival of 1840—Dinner—The new palace at Brunswick—The Hof Theater—More North German good-nature—"Guido and Ginevra"—Well-contrived stage arrangements—A word upon classicality—French operas with German words—The performance—Schmetzer—Pöck—Madame Fischer-Achten—The fourth act—The catastrophe of my evening.

THE last entertainment of the Brunswick Festival was Dr. Mendelssohn's morning concert, given in the saloon where the public dinner had been held. The *programme* was excellent, alike for its selection and its brevity.

FIRST PART.

Overture.
Air, "Il mio tesoro," sung by Herr Schmetzer *Mozart.*
Concerto P. F. (D minor), performed and composed by - - - - - *Mendelssohn.*

SECOND PART.

Violin *Concerto.* Herr Müller - - - *Molique.*
Serenade P. F. and orchestra, performed and composed by - - - - - *Mendelssohn.*
Symphony (A major) - - - - *Beethoven.*

The pianoforte was, of course, in this concert, the principal attraction. Herr Schmetzer's singing of "Il mio tesoro," was coarse and unfinished. Moreover, Herr Müller, the leader of the renowned Brunswick quartett, though an excellent violin-player of the true, as opposed to the tremulous and spasmodic school originated by Paganini, failed to interest me either by any speciality of execution, or in the choice of his music. With all their soundness of construction, and the quaint and graceful piquancy of some of their *finales*, there is a certain dryness in the *concertos* of Molique, which renders them but moderately attractive to the amateur who is no violinist, save when they are aided by their composer's sound and humorous performance.

The pianoforte playing, then, was the chief

treat. It is rarely that I have been so delighted without novelty or surprise having some share in the delight. It would have been absurd to expect much *pianism*, as distinct from music, in the performance of one writing so straightforwardly, and without the coquetries of embroidery, as Mendelssohn. Accordingly, his performance had none of the exquisite *finesses* of Moscheles, on the score of which it has been elsewhere said, that "there is wit in his playing;" none of the delicate and plaintive and spiritual seductions of Chopin, who swept the keys with so insinuating and gossamer a touch, that the crudest and most chromatic harmonies of his music floated away under his hand, indistinct, yet not unpleasing, like the wild and softened discords of the Æolian harp; none of the brilliant extravagances of Liszt, by which he illuminates every composition he undertakes, with a living but lightening fire, and imparts to it a soul of passion, or a dazzling vivacity, the interpretation never contradicting the author's intention, but more poignant, more intense, more glowing than ever the author dreamed of. And yet, no one that ever heard Mendelssohn's pianoforte-playing could find it dry—could fail to be excited

and fascinated by it, despite of its want of all the caprices and colourings of his contemporaries. Solidity, in which the organ touch is given to the piano without the organ ponderosity—spirit (witness his execution to the *finale* of the D minor *Concerto*) animating, but never intoxicating the ear—expression which, making every tone sink deep, required not the garnishing of trills and *appoggiaturi*, or the aid of changes of time, were among its outward and salient characteristics. Within, and beyond all these, though hard to be conveyed in words, there was to be felt a mind clear and deep; an appreciation of character and form referring to the inner spirit rather than the outward details: the same which gives so exquisitely southern a character to barcarole, and gondola tune in the composer's "Lieder ohne Worte," and its fresh, Ossianic, sea-wildness to his overture to the "Hebriden," ("Isles of Fingal"); the same which enabled him, when little more than a boy, in the happiest piece of descriptive music of our time, to illustrate Shakspeare's exquisite fairy scenes neither feebly nor unworthily. Demanding, as it does, execution without grimace; fancy, cheerful and excursive, but never morbid; and feeling

under the control of a serene, not sluggish spirit —Mendelssohn's is eminently manly music ; and loses effect, beyond that of almost any other of his contemporaries, when attempted by female hands.

The *Concerto* and the Serenade were too soon over—things to be regretted as not lasting longer, for the sake of the manner in which they were performed, and because they were almost the last music of the evening. The applause which attended them was what might have been expected—what was deserved. Then came the beautiful Symphony by Beethoven, which was nardly relished according to its merits—for who can settle himself to enjoy a last pleasure ? Then drove up the primitive equipages, and the remarkable charioteers I had watched arrive, in such a different mood, but three days before ; and the glory of "the celebrity," as Dr. Burney primly called the Handel Commemoration in Westminster Abbey—was over !

Such was that hearty enjoyable thing, a North German Festival in 1839 ; falling short of the

splendour of our own provincial meetings, in the absence of commanding great talent; but devoid of the costliness, the cumbrousness, the fatigue, and the discomfort, which used to make an Oratorio in Birmingham, York, or Norwich, very nearly as awful a pleasure as a coronation or a state funeral.

The very important part taken by amateurs in these meetings, too, distinguished them from the generality of English performances some dozen years ago. It ensured to the musical execution that highest good-will and enjoyment which is not by any possibility to be purchased from those to whom professional performance is a mechanical habit, cultivated for profit. Where almost every father, mother, or lover, among the audience has a *Lotte* or *Lena* in the chorus to look after, a chorus becomes a much more interesting object than in cases where it is contracted for by some chorus-master, and the faces belong to the ragged, mournful nymphs and cavaliers of the theatre, so rueful to see, however fine they may be to hear! Twelve years ago, this intimate, and (so to say) family air, imparted to a grand performance, was relishing to an Englishman, because of its strangeness.

We have lived to see wonderful approaches towards its adoption in England.

The selections of music given on these occasions, however, were sometimes calculated to disappoint those who had conceived a high idea of German musical taste and cultivation. At the Summer Festival of 1840, given at Mecklenburg-Schwerin, where, also, Mendelssohn presided, and the "St. Paul," with the "Creation," were performed entire, four of the vocal pieces at the concert were, an air by Faccioli, Donnizetti's sickly "Vivi tu," Bellini's noisy duet, "Suoni la tromba," and a flimsy bravura, with violin *obbligato*, from Herold's "Pré aux Clercs." I do not believe that Schubert's songs were, at that time, in any German concerts, stock pieces, as much in request as they were already at Paris.

On the other hand, this very Schwerin Festival furnished a signal illustration of the extent to which, before the Revolutions of 1848, Music brought "gentle and simple" together in Germany. So pervading was the importance of the meeting that the Duke placed all his officers and household attendants at the service of the committee.

But though the Brunswick Festival was over, the guests seemed still loath to separate. The table at the "Blue Angel" was as full as usual; the indescribable viands with which it was spread were, as usual, consumed "lustily, and with good courage." My lot cast me into the neighbourhood of a very gentlemanly and agreeable officer: but the subject of our conversation was anything but gratifying—it being the coarse and disgraceful outbreaks by which certain of King Ernest of Hanover's then newly imported satellites, had recently managed to degrade the name of Englishman in the country. I was glad to change the subject for the Harz country, and Mademoiselle Löwe, of the Berlin Opera—a never-failing topic. So often as I sat down to table, or entered a public conveyance, in 1839-40, this lady's gifts and graces were extolled to me with warm commendation as the best thing in North Germany.

Dinner was despatched in greater haste than usual, and the guests were banding together in plans for the rest of the day—the favourite one being a ride of seven miles along the newly completed railroad to Wolfenbuttel, where a *Café Turc*, with its excellent band of music, opened its

doors to gratify the national propensity for coffee-house and tea-garden meetings. Less than this contented me; and having a place in the diligence to Goslar, which I thought would start early the next morning, and a stall for the opera that evening, I gave myself up to the moment, and strolled out to have one more look at a pleasant place I was not likely soon to see again. My hour's ramble was principally occupied in admiring the outside of the Palace, the new building by Herr Ottmer, already celebrated among the musicians by his excellent and classical Sing-Academie at Berlin, and who is, if I mistake not, a Brunswicker. Nor was it a small pleasure, while sauntering round this fine building, and regaling myself among the orange-trees which border its terraces, to encounter so many good-humoured and well-dressed groups of all classes and conditions: so the afternoon hour went over tranquilly and agreeably, till it was time to drop into my place at the Court Theatre.

The Opera House at Brunswick is agreeably sized; indeed, most of the theatres in Germany are well proportioned; if small, without that feeling of confinement—if large, without that obtrusive vastness, which severally make our London

minor and major theatres so comfortless, in spite of the superior beauty of their decorations. The ducal box is to the left of the stage, and the first row of stalls was exclusively occupied by blue uniform coats and bullion epaulettes; the whole caparison so redolent of tobacco, that one regretted it should be worn by such clean-limbed, comely wearers. Hospitality and civility, I have said, were in the air of Brunswick. In England, we are too apt to behave in our public places, to the neighbours chance sends us, as though every look we gave them was a demonstration defensive of home, hearth, and pocket, against *Robert Macaire* and other such gentry; or if we lay aside our surliness and break through that barricade of monosyllabic remark — the "*fluide Britannique*," with which George Sand charges us—it is to overdo civility and become indiscreetly familiar. Between the acts of the opera, I was claimed, by one of the most agreeably intelligent gentlemen I ever encountered, whom I had all the week admired at the *table d'hôte*, for the care he took of his charge—two young ladies; and because his head reminded me of the beautiful and spiritual sketch in oil of Thorwaldsen brought from Rome by Rothwell.

Not only now did he give me more information than I was able to take in and remember, about the objects of natural and scientific interest in the district I was bound for; but he encouraged one of his shy, gentle-looking companions to talk to the stranger on lighter topics, with an obvious pride in her excellent English, manifested by a complacent smile at every remark she made, which was very engaging. I could not but think, while profiting by his good-nature, how differently matters go at home, and how little chance any ill-dressed foreigner, with two travelling words of the language in his mouth—the "How much?" for instance—that inquiry introducing the innocent German in England to such a painful acquaintance with the different values of money — would run of having his evening's pleasure in one of our theatres thus enhanced.

I had naturally anticipated my first opera in Germany with great interest. My expectations, it is true, in some matters were not immoderate. I feared, from my experiences of the Festival, that I should find voices better willed than taught to sing, and actors whose physical powers were a little at variance with the characters they under-

took to represent—a *Juliet* of a certain age, and of a matronly port—a *Romeo* guiltless of figure, but not guiltless of obtrusively displaying his deficiencies, by dress and gesture. But I had some experience of German orchestras and choruses; some hope, in *Herr Kapellmeister* Methfessel's selection of good music; and it never, in those days, had occurred to me that I was to come to the Brunswick Festival to hear M. Halévy's "Guido and Ginevra,"—a work not particularly popular in its birth-place, Paris, though there aided by the magnificent voice and magnificent acting of Duprez.

There are some stories for which novelists and dramatists have a hankering thoroughly unaccountable. One is this same legend of the *Strada della Morte* in Florence,—which in Magdeburg is given to the Frau von Assenburg's monument, —and in England, I now forget to which Abbey Church vault:—a legend which not even Mr. Hunt's rich and delicate poetry and fine conception of character* have been able to popularise

* Though the "Legend of Florence" has been the subject of much excellent criticism, it seems as if one of its strongest points of excellence has been too generally overlooked—the character of *Agolanti*, as a study of bad temper. To make so ignoble a failing an object of sympathy is impossible; it is but the grander

with us. The French librettist M. Scribe,—unlike the rest who have been led away by one or two effective situations to treat a subject in its interest singularly morbid, and in its close altogether intractable, — has set these in the midst of horrors of great melodramatic potency, and thus made up a book, after its coarse kind, exceedingly effective. It may be this, yet more than a tendency to play French Opera, which has helped to insure for "Guido and Ginevra" a popularity in Germany, never gained by it in Paris. This was its first performance in Brunswick.

In writing of the component parts of German

crimes and the grander passions which exercise a fascinating influence. But in Mr. Hunt's play there is an individuality thrown into the part of the harsh and cruel husband, which makes him far overtop all his other fellow-actors, and gives his unjust doings a share in our interest as well as their sorrows. He has his trials as well as *Ginevra*. He has within him that dark and perverted spirit which makes him strong in his own warped sense of predominance and authority: he is beset without by a herd of gay, communicative, interfering, people, whose very presence is hateful to one so grave and reserved; and who, while they plead with him and lecture him, are totally unable to comprehend the terrible possession under the influence of which he inflicts the wrongs they would benevolently redress. He is, in short, altogether the man of real life, not the unredeemed villain whom "limners love to paint, and ladies to look upon;" and there are few figures in the list of modern creation so simply and clearly conceived, so simply and completely wrought out.

opera, according to the degrees of merit, first should come the chorus and orchestra; then the singers in combination; then the stage arrangements; lastly, the singers individually considered. But yet more than by the orchestra, for which M. Halévy's music offers such ample occupation,—and yet more than by the chorus, which, in the "Guido," is put to sing the poorest music in which any national style was ever attempted,—was I struck with the exceeding propriety and sedulousness with which the opera was got up. The stage arrangements at Brunswick were the first illustrations I witnessed in Germany, of the skill and intelligence which are brought to bear upon every performance; no matter what the means may be—no matter what the scale on which it is produced. Thus, in the "Guido," the first act has the *festa* of the *Madonna de l'Arco;* the third, a double scene, the upper portion of which displays a dim and mouldering chapel, with a remote perspective of heavy columns and arches draperied with banners, and hung with heraldic escutcheons; the one requiring prodigality as to numbers and decorations—the other, space. Both were afforded on a stage of no very eminent

dimensions, the former from a wardrobe and store of properties any thing but dazzling.

The execution of M. Halévy's music by the orchestra and chorus was very good, though short, of course, of the high finish of *l'Académie Royale*. To have looked for this would have been preposterous: the wonder is, not that the truest style and the most delicate polish should not be entirely attained, but that correctness and firmness of performance should be possible under the circumstances. In 1839-40, not only was a constant change of opera performances part of every system of management throughout Germany, but a constant change of schools. The traveller would hear one night "L'Elisir d'Amore;" the next, "La Sonnambula,"—"Le Postillon de Longjumeau" as a certainty,—nor less certainly Meyerbeer's "Robert,"—however limited might be the resources of the theatre. At that time there was curiously small opportunity of hearing even the stock-operas of Mozart and Weber; and the principal Brunswick singers employed in this very "Guido"—Herren Pöck and Schmetzer—when in London, were found somewhat unprepared for the classical music of their own country which they

were called upon to perform there. Thus, not only was it next to impossible that there should be any settlement of style as regards performance, such as at once decides the individuality of a French orchestra, but the number of rehearsals must also necessarily have been very limited. All the musical world knows to what extent the composer's privilege in this respect is carried at the Parisian opera; where again his ministers in the orchestra have not to contend with a strange and antipathetic music. I do not suppose that it would be possible with French singers, and under French direction, even at the great metropolitan theatre, to "get together" the "Euryanthe" of Weber in twice the time which probably in Brunswick was devoted to the study of the "Guido and Ginevra." The neatness of Herr Methfessel's orchestra particularly struck me, in one passage of *Ginevra's* great tomb scene, where a rapidly moving accompaniment of groups of six semiquavers, passes from tenor to bass, in an unbroken and close *pizzicato*, requiring much firmness to maintain. The female chorus was crude in tone; but its part in the opera lies high, and frequently in those extreme keys which the elder composers judi-

ciously avoided, even in days when the diapason of the orchestra was some half a tone lower than it is now.

The principal singers went through their parts moderately well, but no more. The peculiar structure of the French language stamps so much individuality of form upon its music, that the latter, when mated with a translated text, becomes generally ungracious. Even Rossini's "Guillaume Tell," which is not wholly French, loses (so to say) its *bouquet*, when given with Italian words. How much more must the music of M. Halévy suffer, every note of which tells of Paris and the *Conservatoire*, by being fitted with the heavier and less tractable German rhymes and phrases! Hence the efforts of the vocal *corps*, though satisfactory, were very laborious. Herr Schmetzer, was never the person best fitted by Nature to enact the part of a love-lorn swain. He had attired himself, too, with singular courage: and having forborne, by "planting out" the flatnesses of his face after the picturesque fashion of Italian heroes, to give his beautiful voice the chance of seeming to issue from chivalric lips, the painful contortions of his fat tenderness amounted

to the ridiculous, reminding one, when his sadness was the sorest, of Jan Steen's saints and martyrs. But he sung the exquisitely mannered *romance* in the first act tolerably sentimentally; and in the great tomb scene, where the hero goes down into the vault to bewail his beloved ere her trance breaks, as a deep and friendly shadow veiled his gesticulations, he was forcible and impressive. Herr Pöck, the *Agolanti* of the opera, performed the cruel husband's part with manly, muscular spirit, and an amplitude of crude tone, leading every one to regret that position or inclination had caused him to neglect the refinements of vocal cultivation. Madame Fischer-Achten, again, though chargeable with that maturity of person which, to English eyes, amounts to so serious a drawback, pleased me more than any German *prima donna* I was afterwards to hear, by a fair *soprano* voice capable of neat and easy execution, and a truth and intensity of passion of which our operatic ladies in those days rarely dreamed. The actor who played *Fortebraccio*, the hired assassin, by whose ministry *Ginevra* is poisoned, at the instance of her rival, the courtezan *Ricciarda*, was at once feeble, heavy, and elaborate in his attempts to give the

dash of cowardly and superstitious humour which the part requires to relieve the odium of his mercenary villany. But such attempt was made: the whole *corps*, indeed, was in possession of the story as well as of the music, and carried the audience along with them. Nor was the Brunswick audience difficult to carry along;—seeming to be at once fair and patient, willing and enthusiastic. I should have been ashamed of myself, could I have there criticised by the stop-watch, and forborne to bear the enthusiasm company.

"Guido and Ginevra" has never been played in England, with or without music; so it may be mentioned that, to heighten the story with an additional dose of horror, the scene is laid in Florence, during the time of the plague, and the death of *Ginevra* is compassed by the mercenary *Fortebraccio* selling to her an infected veil. In the fourth act, after she has been delivered from the tomb by the band of plunderers who descend thither to strip the rings from her fingers, Poetical Justice ordains that the pestilence should strike the husband, who refuses to receive her,—and that upon his wretched mistress showing terror and cowardice, and attempting to

escape, he should drag her towards him, and declare frantically that she is his for life and death! Grossly repulsive as is the melodrame of this situation, I was for the moment all eye and ear,—so thoroughly wound up to the highest pitch of attention, as to be annoyed by a whispering in my neighbourhood, and impatient at having my coat-sleeve plucked. I turned at last —to meet a dozen moist, heated, earnest faces looking furious things at me for my impassiveness in not having earlier attended to a summons which by this time was disturbing all the *parterre*.

It was a moment before a romantic theory of *espionnage* and police connected with my questioner in the black velvet coat had flashed past me. Who *could* want me? There he stood—the civil, fat, flustered head waiter of the "Blue Angel," mopping his forehead, and quite too much out of breath to speak. Cruikshank or Leech might have designed his look of upbraiding impatience at the tardiness with which the truth broke upon me, that the *eilwagen* for Goslar started, not, as I had pleased to suppose, at eight on the following morning, but at ten that very night,—the third quarter after

nine having already struck; my bill being still unpaid, and my baggage still unpacked. Greater became the honest man's disapproval, when he found that I could only laugh at the blunder—only laugh while scouring the streets at his heels to the astonishment of the placid evening pleasurers—only laugh at the scene awaiting me in my comfortless little room at the "Blue Angel." There the entire household, from Herr Driesen, the landlord, down to the least male thing in his employ, was bent on the hospitable duty "of speeding the parting guest;"—one cramming away an odd stocking; another a bunch of pens and a journal; a third, in his zeal to economize space, and to give me every tittle that rightfully belonged to me, all but emptying a half-finished bottle of Seltzer water into the compartment of my portmanteau allotted to clean linen. It was all in vain: the clock struck the fatal hour long ere the task was done; and the *thalers* paid for my place must needs be sacrificed. It was vexatious, with them, to have lost the end of "Guido and Ginevra," which I know not even to this day.—The rest was all easy enough. It was easy to resign myself to another night in

Brunswick, and to take vehicle the next day for Halberstadt, which, though not in a direct route, was equally eligible with Goslar as a starting point to the Harz country.

IN THE HARZ.

1839.

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CHAPTER I.

A NIGHT ON THE BROCKEN.

From Brunswick to Halberstadt—Mademoiselle Löwe—The "Prince Eugene" at Halberstadt—Its landlord—News of Lord Eglintoun and the Marquis of Waterford—The "Close" in Halberstadt—The Jehu—Wernigerode—Travelling puppet-show—Ilsenburg—Inn sketches—The old man and the child—Walk to Ilsenstein—Ascent of the Brocken—The Brocken-haus—Göttingen students—The sunset—More inn sketches—The traveller's book; German and English entries therein—The entertainment of the evening—A word on part-singing and popular music in Germany—*Liedertafeln* Societies founded by Zelter—Younger *Liedertafel* Society—Their meetings—Their organization—The Germans' love of scenery as well as smoke—Weber's part-songs—"Am Rhein"—German ignorance of English part-songs—The winding up of the orgie.

A TRIFLE of tobacco-smoke to be swallowed allowed for, the drive from Brunswick to Halberstadt was pleasant enough. The afternoon was glorious—the perfection of autumn weather—

and the road offers some agreeable objects. Between Brunswick and Wolfenbuttel stands the Duke's country-house of Richmond, which is apparently as English in its Elizabethan style, and in the trimness of the rich garden round it, as in its name. Then the trees on either side of the way were hung with a profusion of apples, plums, and pears, glowing with every sunny colour of the season, and so appetizing as to make it positively disappointing that, at the first change of horses, no other refection was to be procured than a cup of coffee and a cigar. Every trench-bank and field enclosure, too, showed a roadside Flora of poppies, campanulas, and huge mulleins, gay enough to attract any eye that is sensitive to rich colour. Not long after Wolfenbuttel was left behind, the Brocken began to rise on the horizon;—and what is there in the world so engaging to the fancy as watching the gradual growth of a hill,—more especially if the hill have a name and a legend?

My companions in the *schnellpost* were cheerful and good-natured. While waiting under the vine which clothes the wall of the Brunswick post-house, we had become very

sociable. As we jogged on, we discussed the Festival just over, and agreed that Mendelssohn was the musical hope of modern Germany. I was warned, when I reached Leipsic, to open my ears to Mademoiselle Schlegel,* as a young singer of great promise, and excessively pretty to boot. I was promised a wonderful treat in Berlin, from the Löwe—the only songstress, as far as my experience served, who enjoyed a general, as distinguished from a local reputation, in North Germany,—and who was then as popular among all travellers as Madame Vestris in England. It was of no use to quote Grisi or Persiani,—had I named Madame Dorus-Gras, a French singer, it would have been as much as my popularity was worth. "There was no one, there had been no one, like the Löwe, for beauty and brilliancy, since the days of Sontag. —Happy was the man who could hear her, and happier he who could speak to her!"

The day went down gloriously, and the friendly and thriving town of Halberstadt, where we joined the great road to Berlin, looked quaintly picturesque in the strong lights and broad purple shadows of evening. I cannot

* Now Madame Köster. 1852.

fancy a pleasanter halting-place for a night than the "Prince Eugene." While I was discussing the savoury roast partridge (a sure *piece de resistance*, let me warn all those whom the indigestibilities of a German supper *karte* annoy), the master of the house came and took the chair at my side,—as handsome, well-informed, and thoroughly courteous a host as Prussia can show. One of my fellow-travellers had acquainted him with my designs on the Harz country, and my inexperience in its language; and, with as much circumstantial civility as he could have used to detain the most desirable guest, in ten minutes of very good French, the whole plan was arranged for me, commodiously and inexpensively, and I was at leisure to satisfy as well as I could the curiosity of my friendly entertainer about the Eglintoun tournament.—Upon the strength of this, the Coronation, and the London and Birmingham railroad, any one who could communicate was sure of being voted agreeable in Germany during the summer of 1839. Only six weeks later, while sitting among heaps of pressed grapes, at the door of a tavern at St. Goar, waiting the coming of a Rhine steamer, I saw the boatman who had rowed me from

the Lurleiberg pause over his bottle of colourless and fragrant wine, and the untidy landlady let her knitting drop forgotten on her knee, while a white-haired and spectacled official belonging to that small town read aloud, from the "Rhein-und-Mosell-Blatt," the tragical issue of Mr. Pratt's upholstery, and the last Scottish freak of the Marquis of Waterford. To think of thus stumbling, as it were, upon Lord's Cricket Ground and Limmer's Hotel, within sight of the Katz and the Schweitzer Thal!

But I am wandering away from the capital host, and capital coffee, and capital bed, at the "Prince Eugene."—It was five o'clock in the morning when I woke and leaned out of my window. The air was clear and fresh enough to put spleen itself into spirits—the sky without a cloud, and day coming up so fast and so brightly behind the minarets of the great church as to declare that a splendid sunrise was at hand. Splendid it was; and I hastened abroad to spend the half-hour which was to elapse ere the vehicle and Jehu purveyed for my Harz excursion made their appearance, in prying about the little town. But I did not get beyond the Platz—a fine enclosure shaded with well-grown trees, surrounded

with ancient houses, and commanded at its extremities by Our Lady's Church and the Cathedral—a pair of grand old buildings, which looked solemn, but not severe, in the cheerful but delicate light of early day. In a niche against one of the houses was a grim carved effigy, which, for collar, had been decked with a garland of flowers—now withered. Here and there the morning face of comfortable man or comely matron looking out of an open door, or through a diamond-bright window, made an impromptu Ostade, which would have been worth its hundreds in a picture gallery.—Few places seen so casually have left so clear and so cheerful an impression on my mind as Halberstadt. To judge from the list of its manufactories it ought to be thriving as well as cheerful; nor should the lover of letters like it the less from its having been the residence of Gleim, the Mæcenas of some of Germany's best men of genius. To tempt the musician, I have but to say that the organist of the Cathedral, whom we met at Brunswick, so loudly vaunted his instrument (but organists have that way with them), that Dr. Mendelssohn had consented but the day before my arrival to stop on his homeward

journey to Leipsic, and give it a trial at the hour of fashionable London midnight, or six in the morning.

Half an hour behind his time, a shabby little carriage, drawn by a shabby little pair of horses, jingled up to the door of the "Prince Eugene." But the equipage was well worth waiting for in virtue of its driver,—as honest, good-natured, and intelligent a fellow as ever made a party of pleasure more pleasant. Small civil eyes with a touch of roguery in them,—a walnut-brown complexion, a wide mouth containing a case of the whitest, cleanest teeth in North Germany, —a stout jean shooting-jacket, and a tidy blue cloth cap, such ingredients made up my Jehu,— who, to crown his perfections, could command a few words of French, a few of English, a few of Latin, and neither smoked nor wished to smoke. He deserved to belong to the town.—We were presently rattling through its ancient gateway, and across the open plain towards the hill country.—The morning kept its early promises —more inspiriting weather for a ramble could not be imagined—and those alone, who, during fifteen years, have only exchanged town for town, can comprehend the fulness of good-will

with which I gave myself up to the influence of the hour and the scenery.

It was a day of pictures. For the first German mile we had groups of people harvesting in the fields, looking up as we passed to nod, and greet us with a good-humoured "*tag*," or hailing us from the primitive waggons of the country upon which they were clustered. Then, though wretchedly poor was the hamlet (I lost its name) at which Carl Alhelm stopped to give his horses and himself breakfast from the same junk of *pumpernickel* — it was a fair specimen of the ruinous-picturesque. Shortly after leaving this, the hills, every one of which has its own quaint form and its own quaint legend, began to close in upon us,—the fruit-trees on either side the road to be fewer, and the chestnuts more numerous. We were presently within sight of Wernigerode, a strange little walled town, overcrowed by its castle—an imposing but heavy mass of building which loads the thickly-planted hill rising abruptly beyond the walls. Not far from this we encountered another painter's group. It was an itinerant puppet-show, the properties of which, dead and living, were crammed into a small covered cart, while the

lank, knavish, gipsy-looking man, who throughout all the world presides over such vanities, trudged lazily on by its side. I have seen a "Flight into Egypt" by one of the ancient Flemish masters—Paul Brill, perhaps, or Breughel—with precisely such a landscape, and figures little more refined. Wernigerode was soon passed, and Altenrode too, of whose old convent there was no getting a peep among the high walls and thick-leaved plum-trees, and a good hour before mid-day we were fairly on the skirts of the Wonderland; at Ilsenburg—a little red-roofed village nestling picturesquely in the opening of the valley, where the Ilse, clear and brown as a cairngorm stone, hurries out into the plain. At the "Red Trout"—a pleasant little inn—mules and guides are to be heard of, and, report says, to be paid for exorbitantly. In my own case it was not so: the breakfast was cheap and good; and my Jehu, from whom I was here to part company for the day, found out a guide for me, who, if less companionable, was no less honest and civil than himself.

There were other parties bound for the Brockenhaus—our station for the night—whom

I had time to observe during my own breakfast, and while waiting till the guide should have dined. One pair in particular — an old man and a boy—made a singular contrast. Never did I see a more repulsive study of age without respectability than the former—a lean, nimble, brawling fellow, for ever in a passion, who wore a long loose wrap-rascal, the shrunk sleeves of which showed the whole of his enormous hands, and a cap perched upon, rather than covering, a profuse crop of ill-kept and coarse grizzled hair. But his face was the worst: its yellow and blood-shot eyes, its brindled complexion of scarlet and tawny, its dry, thirsty mouth garnished with straggling teeth, and always agape to the misery of every one in the neighbourhood, told of debauchery as plainly as they could speak. His companion was a fair gracious-looking boy of fourteen, with a clear blue eye, rosy German cheeks, and a voice as shrill but twice as loud as a girl's. For a good five minutes after they had left the "Red Trout," I heard the hoarse bawl of the one, and the piercing answer of the other, as they pushed off towards the Brocken. It was a positive boon to be spared such company on the road.

My guide came. He, too, was an old man, but with his wise withered face and his white hair, his tidy blouse and his sheepskin knapsack, he looked like a palmer, when compared with the unclean roisterer who had just quitted us. In five minutes we were beyond the boundaries of Ilsenburg, and, turning away from the stream, began to ascend a steep bank, close under the walls of a poor little gray church, built among the ruins of a monastery. This can now only be traced in a dusty and dark cellar, the mouth of which must be passed by all who would mount to the Ilsenstein. The path leads through a croft, which was as thickly spread with the lilac crocus as if it were a Nottingham meadow. Then comes a fir wood: huge stones shagged with moss, peering out capriciously on either side of the path; and among them the richest tufts of foxgloves I have ever seen. Where, indeed, should faëry-caps grow if not in the Harz country?—Here and there, as we began to mount, an opening through the trees afforded a lovely prospect of the plain, dotted with clean red-roofed villages, and framed by the entrance of the valley. The Ilsenstein, passing which—as all the readers of Shelley's

wonderful fragment from "Faust" know—the Witch, on the Walpurgis-night, saw—

"the owl awake in the white moonshine,"

is a grand promontory of rock, jutting out into the valley, and crowned with an iron cross, in memorial of the brave achievements of Count Stolberg's troop during the war. The view thence is superb. But with the best will in the world to surround myself with a visionary atmosphere, I could not do it. The day was too fine; the brawling of the stream, when we again joined it, was too merry and musical; and the only thing to be noted as in the least "eerie," was the stillness of the columnar pine woods through which we mounted—broken, not by bird or breeze, but by the clicking of the locked wheels of the charcoal-burners' carts as they slipped down to the valley below—a measured but unfamiliar sound. As we ascended higher, the cessation of this noise was supplied by the perpetual bubbling and tinkling of countless runnels of water, that creep away under the stones, which shoulder each other as countlessly and closely as if the Gnomes had made a compact that not a tree should have room to grow. In

spite of all the fancies of the scene, however, the ascent of the Brocken, even to one endowed with the most willing of imaginations, is a rough and picturesque walk of three hours and a half, up a tolerably steep and very stony hill—nothing more.

The little plain at the top, like all mountain plains, is harsh and barren in its physiognomy. The inn is a strong and gloomy house of refuge, one story high. The wind was keen enough, even on that still afternoon, to intimate how it *could* roar about the thick logs and timbers of which the Brockenhaus is built. Hard by the inn stands a tower, also built of massive wood, and the view thence is as magnificent as expanse can make it: small points, which the eye must strain itself to see honestly, standing for towns; hair lines for roads; and tufts of moss for reaches of wood. There is nothing, however, either in distance or foreground, to render it comparable to the panorama commanded by the Great Winterberg in Saxon Switzerland. Had I enjoyed the tower to myself, nevertheless, I could have lingered there, as long as daylight lasted, to exercise the powers of discovery for which such a wide prospect gives fair occasion; but I had at

least twenty fellow-gazers; and what with the hubbub made by them while hacking their names on the timber battlements—contradicting each other about this *schloss* or the other spire, at boatswain pitch—hallooing to their mates down below, or playing violent tricks with each other—a noisier score of scenery-hunters

"you would not find in Christendie."

They were, for the most part, a party of students from Göttingen—fine lawless fellows, unkempt and loosely dressed, with every vagary of travelling-cap and knapsack, tobacco-bag and forefinger ring—more dirty, more good-natured, more jovial, than anything of the same order to be found in England. If they had planned, during a whole season of class and lecture-work, to come and "make a night of it" on the Brocken, they could not more thoroughly have carried their purposes into execution. The host, who sat in the outer hall of the house making bird-traps, seemed to concern himself little for their comfort; and, now drinking, now smoking, now chasing each other, they scrambled hither and thither, to the *Hexen* altar, and the other stations of a Harz pilgrimage, till the setting of the sun,

and the bitter sharpness of the mountain air, drove them under cover.

Were I able to do it justice, I should hardly venture to expatiate upon that set or burial of the sun, among such intensely mazarine blue clouds, as the ancient artists sometimes introduced into their landscapes with more enterprise than success. After all was gray, there remained still a long evening to be got through in a comfortless apartment, with no luxury of fare attainable to beguile the time. The party of *bürschen* withdrew into a room of their own; and there were left in the *speise-saal* with me, the aged iniquity I had seen at Ilsenburg, his companion with the childish face and voice; another youth, a regular and respectable specimen of the German traveller; and a fourth, who, after his own pattern, was as pretty an example of a rough diamond as one could desire. He might be some twenty-one years old, or thereabouts—stalwart, thick-set, clean-limbed, and bullet-headed; succinctly done up in a sand and salt-coloured coat, the laps of which buttoned behind in a manner more original than becoming; with breeches and gaiters of the same. His fist was as huge as that of Duke Adolph of Gueldres, in

Rembrandt's marvellous portrait at Berlin; his stentorian voice never was still; his thick utterance was to be ascribed to the loss of two front teeth, which gave a peculiar villany of impudence to his face; and when the huge bull-dog belonging to the Brockenhaus, Cerberus by name, nestled up to the side of his chair, and, lifting up a surly head, showed a hair-lip, the similarity of expression between the human and the canine visages was as strong as anything in Hood's inimitable sketches of Comparative Anatomy. Man and dog—alike burly and savage—were the very figures for a Harz adventure.

Rough as my companions presently proved themselves to be, there was none of that insolence in all their riot which makes the young Englishman, when unchained, or, according to his own parlance, "out on a lark," often so intolerable. If they bawled for wine, it was that the foreigner might share; if they threatened the host with extinction because he had no cards, it was because *we* could not play; and on my withdrawing myself from their clamour, to turn over that motley record, the "Traveller's Book," I was neither molested by word, look, or

sign; nor was the orgie, when at its climax, made an excuse for the slightest uncivil freedom.

This unexpected observance of the humanities by a party so thoroughly wild, and by contrast made striking, when I thought of my neighbour at the Brunswick Festival dinner, was further illustrated—at least fancy would have it so—by the greasy pages of the *Fremdenbuch*, to which I betook myself; the four being now deep in a game not unlike the Italian *morra*. Teazed as I was with their riot; disgusted by the hoarse shrieks of the old gray-haired man, who seemed the most unruly of the party, I think I was yet more vexed by the stupidities, and worse, to which English signatures were annexed in the "Strangers' Book." Enough high-flown German enthusiasm there was, no doubt;—doubtless, too, some German grossness;—but while I stumbled upon traces of almost every singer and dancer belonging to the Brunswick Opera, some of the names garnished with quotations, harmlessly expressive of some feeling for the scene,—it was vexatious to find Englishmen of title and family announcing their presence in one of Nature's high places, by dull and trivial jokes, which

showed how little admiration they could have brought thither. Captain *This* chronicled the day when he "jumped Jim Crow on the Brocken." Sir *That*, in tracing his route, wrote himself down "as having come from nowhere, and going to Hell." The whole truth should not be spoken at all times, and in all places, says Lord Chesterfield! With such humiliating evidences before me, I felt I had little right to quarrel with the confusion worse confounded, of shouts, exclamations, and part-songs, which bade fair to deafen me as the advance of evening wrought them up to a *crescendo*. By this time the sky had grown pitch black; and in the rare intervals, when a moment's pause permitted its being heard, there came up from the plain below, a murmur of the night-wind, as quiet as a whisper, but as deep in tone as the lowest pedal pipe of an organ. Save for that intimation, it would have been far easier to fancy one's self in Auerbach's Cellar, than on the top of the haunted mountain; for the merry ditties of Zumsteeg, and Eisenhofer, and Blum, and Osthoff, and the explosions of laughter which burst out on every side, had quite too much of rough earthly glee in them, to be for an

instant accepted as the Satanic music of a Walpurgis night.

These part-songs were, in 1839, little known in England, as one of the most national and not least engaging features in modern German music. We had, till then, rested upon our glees with a complacency so exclusive as to make us overlook what our neighbours were about. I question whether a dozen professors in England had heard of these German efforts before the arrival of the Brothers Herrmann. The latter even were by many, who should have known better, strangely confounded with the Tyrolese minstrels; though their classical quartett-playing (the best rehearsed and understood, heard before 1839 in England) must have puzzled those fancying that the wild national air and the well-constructed composition were "all one concern." Among the French I am inclined to believe that the amount of real taste for, and intimacy with, German music was little less partial. A periodical critic, speaking of a concert given at Frankfort in 1838, which some untoward spirits wished to disturb by singing "La Marseillaise," in proof of the French sympathies of the Germans, says, "And this was in the midst of their

own favourite music—in the midst of a classical programme, combining the severe and the wild —'*des morceaux*' by Beethoven, and Tyrolese airs!"

Nothing can be much more ignorant in its flippancy than this; as if the popular music of Germany had not been contributed by its best hands! It is some fifty years since Zelter (best known in England as Goethe's correspondent) and his friend Fleming founded at Berlin a congregation of staid elderly men, who met once a month to sit down to a good supper, and to diversify the pleasures of the table by singing four-part songs, principally composed by themselves.* Their number was forty; and far the larger part of it composed of amateurs or men in office. It was an original statute that no one was eligible as a member who was not a composer, a poet, or a singer. During his life-

* I am not able to mention the date of Haydn's "Cat's Fugue," in four parts; but I think it must belong to an earlier period, and, in any case, is valuable as an evidence of grave science applied to the popular uses of mirth;—I have heard, too, unless I greatly mistake, of comic part-songs as well as *quodlibets* by Sebastian Bach. I feel it, however, particularly incumbent here to remind the reader that I am not writing history, but sketching impressions.

time Zelter was their president and principal composer; and in no branch of art, perhaps, did his peculiar talent evidence itself so brightly as in these convivial effusions, where humour, raciness, a masterly employment of the limited materials at his disposal, and a fine sense of the poetry he took in hand, distinguish him among his contemporaries. Goethe used to give his songs to be composed by Zelter; and many of them were sung at the Berlin *Liedertafel* before they were printed or known elsewhere. Fleming also contributed some fair musical compositions—that to Horace's ode, "Integer vitæ," amongst others.

It was in the year 1815, or thereabouts, that Berger, Klein, and a younger generation of musicians, founded a young *Liedertafel* society, on the same principle, and for the same number of members. Friedrich Forster wrote some very pretty songs for it. Hoffmann, the novel writer and *kapellmeister*, made it one scene of his strange and extravagant existence; and left behind him there an immortal comic song—"Turkische Music," the words by Friedrich Forster. In general, a gayer and more spirited tone pervaded this younger society than belonged

to their classical seniors. It was the practice of both bodies to invite guests on holiday occasions; and by the younger part-singers ladies were admitted twice a year. Nothing could be sprightlier or pleasanter—a little extra noise allowed for—than these latter meetings.

It would seem as if the old German love of corporate processions—the old affection for guilds and burgherships—found an expression in the societies to which this couple of institutions gave rise. They were not long in spreading far and wide. The good suppers became of less integral consequence; original compositions were not always attainable; but in every town it was natural to collect the younger men of all classes, for the purpose of singing together. A regular system of organization, of division and subdivision, has arranged itself. The town societies in combination form provincial assemblies, where many hundreds come together. In the north of Germany the large class of young men, who are either schoolmasters or organists in the towns and villages, or are educated as such at the normal schools, have societies of their own, and periodical celebrations.

The provincial festivals of these societies are

held in the good time of the year, so that open air performances are practicable. A fine site, too, is a thing always chosen. Not very long before my Harz ramble, the *Liedertafeln* societies of that district had been holding a congress at Blankenburg. The natural man of the German, indeed, which seems to require a pipe every hour, and a refection at every milestone, seems never, by the indulgence of his appetites, to be coarsened out of his love of Nature. He loves a fine view to smoke over; during the years of his cub-*hood* will make a riot in such a sanctuary as the top of the Brocken over night, and still earnestly enjoy the panorama and the mountain-walk in the morning. One might have thought that the beer-cellar and "the bosky bourne" must appeal to a totally different class of pilgrims; but it does not seem so. There is a picturesque spirit in all German public festivities, to which we never approach nearer than by rifling conservatories of their flowers, to die in the stifling and oleaginous atmosphere of a ball-room.—These *Liedertafeln* societies take part in other celebrations not their own. When Schiller's statue was inaugurated in Stuttgart, the singing bodies of all

the towns in the districts round about poured in through the gates of the town, one after the other, each with its banners and its music, till the separate chords, to speak fancifully, united in a grand chorus in the market-place. And while there exists a well-trained army of volunteer choristers ready to be called into action on all occasions—it need not be pointed out how different it is in quality to the body of subordinates at once semi-professional and untaught, at whose mercy lies so much of the best music ever to be heard in England—I should say, *laid;* for part-singing was, even in 1839, already flourishing with us like the bean-tree in the Faëry Tale.

It is needless, again, to remark how the works which make a whole great people vocal,—"a whole country" (to quote a forcible expression of the accomplished musical friend to whom I am here indebted for my facts) "absolutely heave with harmony,"—must have a value and an interest in more aspects than one. If we lay aside the sober and serious compositions of the elderly gentlemen, and, on the other, the familiar "Crambambuli," and other such ditties of the *bürschen* (musical weeds worth nobody's owning), there is on every hand, and in every

guild, much to interest. To offer an instance or two likely to be familiar to the English—lyrical music has nothing nobler in her stores than the battle-songs in which the harmonies of Weber and the burning words of Körner are united. We sit by our firesides, it is true, and know not the sound of an enemy's cavalry in our streets, nor the booming of an enemy's cannon without our gates; and hence are touched only faintly by the spell of the soul within them; but it is impossible coldly to listen to the masculine chords and bold modulations of "Lutzow's Wild Chase," and the "Sword Song," and the "Husarenlied." Again, we have taken home to ourselves and half-nationalised "Am Rhein," * because of its spirit and beauty;—though we cannot feel, save dramatically and by going out of ourselves as well as from home, the joviality and mirth of those who dwell in a wine-land, or the kindling of such a spirit as moved the army of

* As the Rhine Song is here spoken of as a composition, the name of its composer may be given (on Berlin authority), as it has been attributed by some to Haydn. It is now said to belong to the same Schulz who was employed on a far less ungenial task, the setting to music of the translated choruses of Racine's "Athalie." He was a *kapellmeister* at Copenhagen.

Liberators on their return from victory, when within sight of Ehrenbreitstein, to burst out with one consent into that noble melody which was heard with little ceasing for two days and nights while the band was passing over the river!

Honour, then, to the part-songs of Germany, and better acquaintance with them! is not the worst toast one could propose at a glee club. But I must say, that beyond having harmonized our "Rule Britannia" in one edition of their "Orpheus," or Part-Singer's *Vade Mecum*, my friends the Germans trouble themselves far too little with our vocal music. By the surprise, as well as delight, which I have seen our madrigals excite in them, it is plain that the reciprocal indifference has been mutual. It ought to be so no longer. If these be not great days of creation, they ought to be good days of acquisition. That long rambling vocal *solos* are ineffective and absurd, and that to cut up a poem into as many movements as there are lines is to betray want of power over forms and progressions, the English glee-writer might learn from such well-knit and admirable compositions as the *Rastlose Liebe* of Spohr, or the beautiful recent produc-

tions of Mendelssohn. The German composer of vocal quartetts might learn to lay stress upon such delicacy of effect as is to be gained by the admixture of female voices from such elegant and charming strains as Stevens' "Ye spotted snakes," and Horsley's "See the chariot." I would alike give over to separate and utter demolition, the rambling accompanied *scenas* and songs which some of our classical writers have devised for the exhibition of a bass or counter-tenor voice, and the instrumental *polaccas* and waltz tunes by Blum and Kuffner, and even Eisenhofer (who is sometimes a delicious melodist*), which disfigure their collections. Enough remains on both sides to be of use and help to the rapidly increasing schools of popular music in England and Germany.

This digression is to be understood as filling a chasm in my chronicle. I do not pretend that all these thoughts and fancies arranged themselves in my mind during the long hours of that evening in which the familiar "*Der*

* As in his "*Schlaf wohl*," one of the most lulling tunes in the catalogue of serenades; in its luxurious sweetness little inferior to the charming theme, "Secondate aurette amici," in "Cosi fan tutte."

Schmidt" of Conradin Kreutzer, and a merry waltz by Blum, with its "*Hop-sa-sa*" burden, were heard but faintly from the next chamber —though sung by a dozen voices—so furious was the noise made by my four companions. Surely never such an outcry came out of so few bottles of wine,—only three, I think, being exhausted by them, and that so foolishly weak in quality as to be almost warrantable under the Temperance seal. Drunk they became, however, to all intents and purposes; and though I had begun by a resolution of holding out to the end as a spectator, about half-past ten the uproar became so ear-splitting that I was fain to quit the company for bed. My ill stars apportioned my chamber next to the room where the revel went on; and though I tried again and again to resort to the "Fantasy Pieces" of Hoffmann, which I had chosen as pocket companion, and again and again endeavoured to read on the Brocken, as I had agreed with myself I would do, his fantastic analysis of Mozart's "Don Juan"—it was all in vain. The table was banged by fists and heels till I thought it must break—the chairs launched hither and thither so furiously that it was a marvel, at

morning-light, to find one leg still united to its partner. Had the wind been provoked to come forth in his utmost fury, he must for once have been outroared. Once or twice mine host tried to quiet a riot so particularly unseasonable to those who were to rise before day-dawn; once the *stube-mädchen* put her head within the door. If piercing noise could take a form, she must have drawn herself back in the condition of the headless barmaid of the goblin tale. It was an hour past midnight ere the unruly pack chose to go to bed. By this time they were all so tipsy —the singers into the bargain—that to stow each in his appointed lodgment was not easy. Up and down the corridor which divides the Brockenhaus, they rushed like a menagerie let loose, pelting each other with their boots, or fighting to keep together or asunder for the night. Two of them, in one of these conflicts, at last burst my door open, and threw all their drunken weight on my bed. Luckily, my light had been extinguished for some time, and I could take means, by the aid of the tough vine-branch with which I had trudged up the Brocken, to free myself of the intruders without getting into a personal brawl. Considerably

stung, as daylight showed their faces to be, by the random strokes necessary to my deliverance, the pair stumbled out as incoherently as they had tumbled in; and at half-past one in the morning, after some hours of irritating exercise (for to this does the endurance of such brutal and violent noise amount), I was at liberty to sleep as well as I could, on the fact that I had no idea of the meaning of the word "*tapage*" till I passed the night on the Brocken in the midst of a rout of Göttingen students.

CHAPTER II.

RÜBELAND.

Morning on the Brocken—Impenetrable atmosphere—Sunrise—Picturesque mountain-walk to Schiercke—Drive from Schiercke to Elbingerode—Church tower—A fantasy on forms—Frightful road—Rübeland—Its delicacies and its shows—The Baumanshöhle—Travelling parties—The grotto—Music underground—Illuminations—Echo—Triumphal march—The dinner; the reckoning after it—Absurd predicament—North German goodwill—Unsuspiciousness and art—*Mrs. Grundy* not among the amateurs—Drive from Rübeland to Blankenburg—Road inspector—Blankenburg.

DURING the three hours of sleep allowed me, old remembrances and new impressions combined themselves into such a whimsically distinct mosaic, that the transcript of the same would possibly not be the dullest page of these journals. But, according to Dr. Watts, the telling of dreams is the sluggard's occupation, and in the Harz country at least few deserve

that character. At five o'clock the inmates of the Brockenhaus were all shaken out of their heavy sleep, to be in time for the far-famed sunrise. One by one the spirits of the last night's orgie made their appearance, looking neither much dirtier nor more debauched for the carouse than they had done the previous evening, and alertly eager for the spectacle they had mounted to see. It was soon evident, however, that of this they were to be disappointed. The aspect of matters on issuing forth reminded me of a graphic expression in Mr. Monck Mason's account of the ascent of the great Nassau balloon, which he described as at midnight silently cleaving its way through black marble. No less dense and substantial seemed the dingy white fog in the heart of which the summit of the Brocken was embedded, and which only gave way a span's breadth before us. Having blundered all round the Prospect Tower ere we came to the door of entrance, we mounted to the summit. In vain; the same world was there as below, and the only appearance or sensation which could possibly suggest the idea of its ever being dissipated, was the sudden passage of some detached scarf of mist, which trailed so close to the face as to

make one aware of the neighbourhood of dampness in motion. The strange apparition of hands protruding from no visible bodies, of heads (*such* heads!) without shoulders, and of coat-tails, seemingly to hang self-supported in the air, were presented in the area of a very few feet. All that could be discovered of the progress of dawn was the change in this provoking envelope, from whitish gray to grayish white; and as our watches announced a quarter to six, the dimmest possible tinge in the east, which took a redder glory, when some fold of the mist, parting for an instant, opened out fleecy depths and vistas so interminable as to defy all hope of their ever vanishing. For one little moment, however, as I strained my eyes towards the quarter of promise, the veil was wholly rent, and a brilliant golden eye showed itself, as if to make disappointment greater, by indicating the existence of no ordinary splendour; but, in another instant, down and round and over us on every side, swept the all-covering envelope; and the sun was seen no more. An hour was spent in vain expectation, until the very landlord of the Brockenhaus, more conscientious than some of his calling, announced

that it was clearly a waste of time for any one to linger there longer, the show being postponed till another day! Such postponements, he added, fell to the lot of five travellers out of every six who hoped to assist at the far-famed sunrise from the Brocken.

The bill for night's lodging, supper, cup of morning coffee, and the refreshment of my old guide, was somewhere under the amount of four shillings; an apology being affixed to the bill for the dearness of the charges, owing to the necessity of all provisions being carried up to the hill-top from a very great distance. This mighty sum discharged, the next step was to Schiercke, where Carl and his carriage were waiting; so, leaving behind the rout of *bürschen*, busily resuming their staves and their knapsacks, I set forth, with a boy to carry my wallet. The scramble down the Brocken was far more striking than the ascent had been. It was this way that *Faust* and *Mephistopheles* mounted; and the masses of rock which stared out from among the larch-trees on either side of the rough path —many of them in their winding-sheets of mist, looking as grim and chill as Lapland idols —were huge in size, and fantastic in their forms,

though still not to compare with the fragments which lie about and overhang the Elbe, in Saxon Switzerland. Some of the pine-trees have been able to grow to a superb height and bulk, from their not shouldering each other so closely as on the other side of the mountain. That morning, too, the underwood was so netted over with gossamer, as almost to lose every form of foliage: and, as we stepped down from boulder to boulder—my guide keeping the cold out by his pipe—through the wet and cottony atmosphere which still formed round us an impervious screen, our rapid and silent progress had far more the air of a journey through a land of enchantment than any part of the previous day's walk. It was eight o'clock when we reached Schiercke, a miserable little village. There I dismissed my guide; and, candied over with hoar-frost during my descent, rejoined the vehicle and its Jehu.

The road we took is by the side of the Bode, a cheerful and tumultuous mountain-brook, overhung in places by fine wooded banks, and not brawling so loudly as to drown the pleasant and lulling tinkle of the cow and sheep bells, which produces an effect not unlike a

harp prelude on the upper strings. The influence of this was hardly to be resisted; and it was more asleep than awake that I drove on for the next hour and a half, till jolted beyond all power of rest or day-dreaming, as we neared Elbingerode. The round to which *Tony Lumpkin* treated *Mrs. Hardcastle*, was a bowling-green compared with the road as it enters and issues from that large, naked, bleak-looking village. Of this, I remember little beyond a severe-looking, square, lumpish church, — its tower crowned with that Saracenic black cap, which seems in the Harz district as inevitably the finish for all buildings of which chance has been the architect, as the extinguisher is everywhere in France. Somewhere or other I have encountered a speculation upon nationality of form and style carried through all the arts; showing, for instance, how *point* (without play upon the words) and neatness characterize alike French poetry, and painting, and costume, and architecture, and take the form of rhythm in French music: how a richer and sweeter harmony pervades all the creations of the South; and is to be felt in the expression of the Florentine painters, and the colour of the Vene-

tians—in the delicious measures of Italian versifiers, and in the whole tissue, whether popular or scientific, of Italian music. As I lay back in the hay-strewn stable-yard of the little tavern at Elbingerode, at once kept awake and lulled by the chime of a quartett of flails, while my trusty driver stopped to rest his horses after the last dislocating half-hour, the recurrence of this terminal form in so many of the less-pretending buildings of North Germany, recalled to me the, perhaps, wire-drawn fancy I have journalized; and I puzzled myself in vain, unable to hit upon any one word which should indicate the genuine and distinctive peculiarities of German, as distinguished from French and Italian art and fancy. On some one such unbroken thread, I am persuaded, do the poetry, the painting, and the music of every country lie more closely side by side than their separate historians have taken the trouble to conceive; and he who could analyze the texture, and trace the direction of the support and link proper to each race and country, would perform a service of no common interest and value. The most superficial thinker upon the spirit, rather than the technicalities of art, cannot penetrate a

hair's depth beneath the surface without being lured on and tantalized by indications of central originating causes, which remain unchanged through the revolutions wrought by time upon the outer world. It were a life's labour to follow out and combine these; and largely must the labourer be endowed with the divining rod of fancy, as well as with the mining tools and the line and the plummet of reason; but the labour is worth the pains.

Thus, letting imagination take the tower of Elbingerode church as text for what is possibly but a dream, the half-hour allotted to baiting was soon over. By this time the sun was very warm, and, provokingly enough, as we receded from the Brocken, the mist slowly dissipated, till the summit became as clear as it had shone when luring me to climb it while I drove along the road to Halberstadt. To extricate a pair of wheels and a pair of horses from Elbingerode, is nothing short of a feat. Such a tract, indeed, I never passed over, save once, in a rough scrambling drive to shooting quarters, among the hills of Glamorganshire. Shortly after issuing from the little town, the road leaves the plain, and again joining the Bode,

runs along the side of a valley, till, in the cleft which the stream has formed between gray and picturesques rocks, not unlike those in Middleton Dale, Derbyshire, the little village of Rübeland is seen — a clean, warm, cheerful-looking haunt of comfort and refreshment, particularly agreeable to reach at noon-tide, after a scanty breakfast, taken at the unnatural hour of five A. M., and seven hours of exposure to the most bracing air a man can breathe.

My driver's face, it was easy to perceive, was popular in those parts; for the landlord of the "Golden Lion"—in shape and visage the very model of an English tailor—bustled to and fro on the appearance of Carl Alhelm's shabby vehicle, with an alacrity which nothing short of two coaches and four would command in England. I should have a capital dinner, he declared—trout of course (the trout of the Harz is capital), and a bottle of his best wine; and, while my dinner was getting ready, of course I would see the Baumanshöhle, the most interesting of the grottoes which make Rübeland a notorious station. I assented: then, of course too, I would have extra lights, to show the grotto to its best advantage; and music in

it too? When one is not particularly anxious or interested in the matter, or in that moody and meditative humour which makes one splenetic or intolerant, it is good wisdom to let guides and *ciceroni* take their own way. The *taxe*, too, for all these luxuries and entertainments, was but a trifle; so the trout was to be put in the pan, and the Marcobrunner in the Bode, and the village rummaged for its band—some twenty men in number.

Before they could be collected, two other parties arrived at Rübeland, and made haste to avail themselves of the opportunity to see the Höhle in its court dress. We mounted the steep bank at the back of the inn, each with a *kittel*, or smock frock of black glazed calico, on his arm, and were presently at the mouth of the cave. Under cover of this were waiting the musicians bespoken for my first and only benefit concert,—a set of good-humoured manly-looking fellows, a good deal besmirched with the labours of the forge and the mine. As they lay about among their cornets, trombones, and other brass instruments, some in shade, some in shine,—they made a capital painter's study of "wayfarers at the mouth of a cavern." I

was much amused with one of the parties of grotto-seekers who were to bear me company. This was a gentleman with two ladies, not very young, odd-looking, and curiously tidy. The gentleman turned up his pantaloons, to be out of danger from the drippings of the stalactites which were to be found on the floor of the cave; the lady bound a handkerchief over her cap, with as anxious a precision as if it had been a *fazzoletto* for a fancy ball. It was not this, however, that so much struck me, as the curiosity, earnest to rapacity, evidenced in all the three faces, which told a pleasant tale of powers of enjoyment, retained in all their freshness, and of credulity willing to believe every thing at a moment's word and warning. They were the most incessant talkers, too, I ever encountered; and from the moment when their carriage stopped at the door of the "Golden Lion," till the moment when mine drove away from it, the time of dinner inclusive, a continuous trio of two *soprani* and one baritone was never out of my ears for one solitary moment. Of the other three I have more to say presently.

After a few moments, our musicians, in

single file, dropped one by one into the hole, down which too we were to vanish. Then each of us, bearing his little tin lamp, began to pick his way down a steep and broken descent, into the bowels of the earth, with that stumbling caution, which is always laid aside some two minutes after daylight is fairly left. I am not going to course the reader through the wonders of the grotto, — the Organ, and the Lion's Head, and the Bust, and the Skeleton Hand,— which Nature and Imagination never fail between them to carve out in all such situations. The awe and mystery of the spot were entirely dissipated by the enthusiastic "*Ach!*" and "*Himmel!*" and "*Wunderhübsch!*" of my companions; and when, upon the principal guide whistling a signal, a cross of light revealed itself in the distance, and the Rübelanders struck up a Prussian march and quick step (one of those things the sight of which in an old music book transports the mind back to such strangely different times), their screams of rapture very nearly hindered me from profiting by the music. Fatiguing as is such violent admiration, it is more tolerable than sulkiness or apathy; and as the solemnities of Nature

were out of reach, it was as well to content one's self with the whimsicalities of man.

The music produced a fair effect. In another mood, I should have wished for less lively and common-place strains, in the midst of all those dimly seen and quaintly writhen rock figures; I should have bespoken the "Amplius," or "Confitebor," written by Beethoven for brass instruments alone, and performed at his own funeral. Yet perhaps there might have been less difference between the reverberations of a Strauss melody, and one of those dark and pompous burial strains, thus heard, than would have been felt in the aisles of a cathedral, or the saloons of a palace. The best got-up scene is often disappointing in effect, when Nature is one of the elements.

The last exhibition in the Baumanshöhle was the burning of sundry blue lights, which diffused a strange and infernal glare throughout the vault, bringing all its darkest nooks and recesses into full notice, and making it a fit scene for the demon court of *Ahrimanes* and the resuscitation of *Astarte* in "Manfred." I never, till I returned to upper earth, knew the full value of "the light of common day."

By this time we were all desperately hungry, and the provisions of mine host of the "Golden Lion" recurred to me most comfortably. One other wonder of Rübeland remained. A most articulate and pertinacious echo inhabits the crags on the side of the Bode, opposite to the Baumanshöhle; and as we walked down from the grotto, the men of Rübeland formed before us in procession, playing marches and *galoppes* as they went—the voice from the hill mocking them all the way. In such state we arrived at the little inn, where Boniface, thinking to make a sulky Englishman comfortable according to his own liking, and turning a deaf ear to all my sociable inclinations, handed me off to a little clean bed-room, glaring with sunlight, and there set before me the promised treat. I could not help thinking I was dining after the fashion of the monarch in "the Song of Sixpence," when, by way of a last indulgence, the village band ranged itself round the window, and gave one more hearty flourish of their trumpets—"an appeal," thought I, "to the long purse which my countrymen are presumed to carry." So availing myself of the interval between the trout and the eternal roast veal

of a German dinner, I opened the window, determined for once in my life to make myself popular by an act of munificence.

Out came my purse—out came its contents; when, at that moment, a conviction in which I know not whether dismay or diversion predominated, flashed on my mind. I had left a good half of the *thalers* apportioned for my Harz journey of three days, with my heavy baggage, at Halberstadt; and if I paid for my banquet and my band with the most laudable attention to economy, it stared me in the face that I should then have some twenty *groschen*, and no more, left for the remainder of my tour. The thorough absurdity of such a falling-short after such an extra regale was all but irresistible; but it was vexatious, owing to carelessness, to be compelled to stint the good-humoured musicians of Rübeland: and some will comprehend the feelings of relief with which I saw the last of them disappear, slowly, and, I dare say, disappointed. Then came a moment's brown study; and, but for the summons of the landlord, who, armed with a dish of plum jelly, recommended me to turn and finish my roast meat while it was hot, I might have leaned out

into the still, sunshiny village street, pondering ways and means for the rest of the afternoon.

Pondering, however, would do no good: the fact was clear that my money was all but done, and only half of my Harz round accomplished. I called my driver, and interrogated him as to the possibility of his delivering me that night at the "Prince Eugene." His horses would not do it, he said, and he could not in conscience take me home without my having seen the most beautiful thing in the Harz—the Rosstrappe. In truth, the brilliancy of the weather, and the rarity of such an excursion, made the thoughts of abridging my first plan thoroughly distasteful. So I sent away my dinner, paid my bill, again counted over my *groschen*, and again leaned out of the window in search of an idea. Some money was to be raised, it was clear; but from whom?

A laugh, in six parts, with a brisk *obbligato* accompaniment of knives and forks, from the sociable party in the parlour, determined me. I resolved to try what the compassion of my fellow grotto-hunters would do. As I stood with the handle of the door betwixt the rooms in my hand, a hundred tales of the frolics of

impudent travelling Englishmen came back to me, and I caught a glimpse in the glass of a person too thoroughly disreputable-looking, by reason of early rising, exposure to the air, and the climbing of muddy ladders, to stand any chance of being believed or assisted; even if he could keep down the strong sense of diversion, which the contrast between the parade before and the petition after dinner excited. A moment more, and I should have lost command of my gravity. So I threw open the door, and, by the aid of the better French than my own of a lady of the party, managed to make my difficulty known. Before my tale was half ended, before I could unfold my passport, or a single authentication to encourage the benevolent, or to explain where I came from and whither I was going, every purse and pocket-book was out on the table; every one was pressing offers of service upon me with a wholesale liberality which it warms the heart to remember; and so earnestly, as well as unanimously, that I had to raise my voice to the highest pitch to give my name and address in Berlin. No one would look at a single corroboratory document, and I might have levied contribu-

tions to any amount. Of course I preferred aid from those belonging to the place of my immediate destination; and having helped myself as moderately as possible out of their store, we shook hands and parted, in the midst of a peal of merriment and mutual good wishes, which are already like things in a dream. I might have spared the egotism of this little adventure, did I not hope that an expression of hearty gratitude might, by some freak of chance, haply meet the eye of those who rendered me such essential service; and were not this timely aid, given to an utter stranger at a moment's warning, too closely illustrative of the unsuspecting cheerfulness and courtesy which, in 1839, seemed distinctive of the intercourse of Germans with the stranger and pilgrim, to be omitted from a chapter in which manners as well as music are sketched.*

* It goes to the heart, on re-issuing the pages of a journal that record such cordial and hearty kindness, to add,—as I must do—that, before 1848, the cheerfulness and courtesy seemed fading out of Germany,—to have retired more and more into remote places,—to have been more and more exchanged for embittered soreness or chill reserve, so far as the Englishman was concerned. The bad manners of our summer tourists—male and female—their exactions, want of sympathy, and want of civility, have had much to do with this darkening of the sun-

The health and prosperity, indeed, of the best music of Germany—that of combination—was largely owing to that very friendly unsuspiciousness which allowed me to be so seasonably helped, and which manifested itself in a freedom and ease of intercourse between the sexes, bearing upon the art with direct and important influences. *Mrs. Grundy* was rarely heard of among the young ladies and young gentlemen of the country, however pertinaciously they chose to sing choruses together, or practise the harmony-music of instruments. As a friend of mine remarked, when adverting to the hindrance which manners, as well as artificial refinements, presented in 1839 to a full and hearty combination of the amateurs of England or France, "The obstacle in both countries is the difficulty your ladies find in moving alone without servants, gentlemen, and other accompaniments *obbligato*. Yet this is almost indispensable to such an undertaking, unless it

shine;—but, more, the creeping canker of ill-reasoned political discontent—on the one hand exacerbated by class-folly and class-prejudice among the rulers, on the other by the unprincipled selfishness of popular leaders. How all the *humour* (in the wide sense of the word) that once gave such relish and individuality to the art of Germany, has dwindled among its people, I have again and again sadly had cause to experience, since the above notes were first published.—1853.

be confined entirely to the inferior classes. Now our damsels, even at night, if there are three or four of them, and an old spinster in the rear, will roam about and fear nothing; or the singing gentlemen will accompany them home; at the bare idea of which every Frenchman's morals would go into fits." There is something in this worthy of honest attention. We cannot, perhaps, return on our track so as to assume a more primitive form of manners; and no audacity is so unbridled, no affectation so pernicious, as the courage and the artlessness of an acted simplicity. The uneasy shame of the first adult English waltzers was a more dangerous profligacy than the unconscious effrontery of many a professional *danseuse*, who has been trained to her exhibitions from her cradle. While exciting our energies for the diffusion of Music, as a desirable and attainable household guest, we shall labour in vain till something is done towards rendering it independent of all cumber, and formality, and expense; to make it a thing of daily love and custom, and not of show. We have better voices than the Germans, and a fair musical organization; but the scientific training of patient study is not less wanting among us

than the social support of a system of manners which shall give room to the art to move easily; and, by detaching it from an exclusive association with paid and public exhibitions, deliver it from the undistinguishing ban under which intellect and morality have so unfairly placed it.*

I saw nothing more beautiful in the Harz country than my drive from Rübeland to Blankenburg. The weather continued genial and cloudless, and the instance of goodwill I have recorded was surely enough to make the dullest of spirits sunshiny. Thus, let no one take my word for it, that Bodenthal is the most beautiful of villages; niched though it be beneath high crags dotted with pine-trees, and with its group of marble works, which have availed themselves of the "water privilege," to stand for the never-omitted water-mill of our landscape painters. But such it seemed.—Nor dare I aver that the hilly miles from Bodenthal to Blankenburg, undulating between warm sloping meadows, covered with noble oaks, whose lower branches sweep the ground, are a richer passage of coun-

* The change which has passed over these matters in England, since the above was written, makes it necessary to again remind the reader, that it is a record of past times.—1853.

try than could be found on many a mail-road in England—say the valley of the Severn. Yet, as Blankenburg is approached, and the country opens, I thought I had never seen view so beautiful—the heavy and quaint-looking castle of the town laid along rather than seated on a knoll above it, and the Regenstein, serving as frames to a wide reach of country. As we were driving from Hüttenrode, the way was blocked up by a heavy wain, loaden with sweet and fresh hay. From the back of this a man jumped out—in face, voice, and dress, the very double of the Ettrick Shepherd—and offered Carl an armful of provender for his horses in return for a ride and a little good company. He was the inspector of the roads in the district, and, getting up beside my Jehu, began, at a noisy rate, to do his part in making me feel at home, by telling me all the news "of the country side." I tried my best to catechise him about the meeting of the *Liedertafeln* societies of the district, which only shortly before had taken place at Blankenburg; but as I did not understand one word in ten he said, of course what he answered was not worth journalizing. He had plenty to tell me on that subject, however, as well as about the excellence

of the crops, the good condition of Carl's horses, and the roughness of the road. The last was enough to make even a bunch of thistles palatable to the poor fatigued beasts who had dragged us over it; how they must have relished, then, their fresh and fragrant supper! A hundred yards before we entered Blankenburg, he leaped from the box, and disappeared among a gang of men at work, with a promise that I should find a good supper, a good bed, and a good host, at the "Weisse Adler." His promise was fulfilled to the letter; and is so, I trust, for the comfort of all travellers, even unto this day.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROSS-TRAPPE.

Blankenburg to Thale — Blech-hütte — One-eyed guide — The ascent — Garland weavers — Harper on the hill — Echo and pistol-shooting — The summit — The Bode-kessel — The descent — A travelling group — A solitary painter — A wood scramble — Conclusion.

PERHAPS I ought to stop at Blankenburg, having no pretensions to draw out an itinerary of the Harz, and few adventures during my third and last day's ramble to report, which touch either music or manners. But it is difficult to break off in a journal full of those pleasant remembrances that light up the fogs of a wintry spring, and fill a dingy street-prospect with

"A mountain ascending, a vision of trees."—

A little jaded, and very unwilling to move, I was driven out of Blankenburg at half-past seven

in the morning. Carl would fain have tempted me up to the platform on which the *Schloss* is built, to take a look at the prospect, and an observation of the building, whose greatest attraction, in my eyes, was its possession, beyond all doubt, of the old original *White Lady*, or Household Demon (cousin-german to the Irish *Benshee*), whose appearance denotes that a death is sure to take place. But I recollected that the palace at Berlin has another *White Lady* equally authentic, and that few spirits of any colour are ever abroad in the morning air. I had seen, moreover, the best of the view on the previous evening; so I sat still, and we drove on.

From Blankenburg, the road, which is wretched, becomes more and more insipid, the *bergs* keeping in the back-ground, till it suddenly turns in among them at Thale, and crosses the Bode, over a wide bed of blanched stones, among which the stream soaks. The "water privilege" is here employed in the service of iron works; and just ere reaching the village belonging to these, which is well nigh as black and grim with charcoal dust as if it stood on the spur of the Yorkshire hills, a one-eyed lad, in face and figure a perfect *Flibbertigibbet*, fastened

upon us. This was to be my guide to the Rosstrappe. Never had any one more completely the true hackney tone and hackney slouch of the fraternity, and it was lucky for my undisturbed meditations that he sucked away so constantly at his pipe as only to be able to give out his legends and other information in scraps between the whiffs. A rough plank bridge crosses the bright and busy Bode; and in a few minutes more the path begins to lose itself among trees, and to mount so steeply, that one seems to ascend by stories rather than a more gradual acclivity. It was easy to gather that this was the great lion of the Harz, from the number of the temptations thrown in the way of the visitor. Scarcely were we in the wood, than a pretty child ran after us, with a nicely knit garland of oak leaves, which she threw over my shoulders; and by the number of dead ones which strewed the path, it would seem as if the trade was a brisk one. There are many artificial stations for rest as the hill is mounted: at Eckart's Höhe, a bare piece of rock jutting out through the trees, where the view over the plain becomes magnificent, and, to my taste, surpassing, because within more manageable compass than, the wider

panorama of the Brocken, the pilgrim is invited to halt to eat and drink at a wayside cottage covered with heather, whose mistress, when I saw it, was a plump pale old *frau*, with as shrewd an eye, and as tidily formal a cap, as if Gerard Douw had just let her out of one of his pictures. Beside her, "at the shieling door," was a faded elderly young person, with that crossed-in-love watering-place look of haggard welcome, which, to my discomfort, threw light on a harp I had seen an instant before under a tree. It was a pity that so lovely a scene should be spoilt by an exhibition; and somehow or other I never felt so intolerant of a favourite instrument as when its owner, laying aside a roomy blue worsted stocking she was knitting for the wearing of her own solid leg, began to tinkle out waltzes, *seguidillas*, and the other tunes one associates so naturally with all that is most squalid in musical itinerancy, and all that is stalest in town life; with dancing dogs and blind men, the scarlet tin tray with its rattling coppers, and the parades of Cheltenham! Those worn-out scraps of ball-room and ballet music, and the unmeaning mechanical smile with which my *groschen* were acknowledged, put a *bad taste* into

my mind as I mounted a story higher. As we came nearer the summit there was more show-work to be gone through; but this was impressive rather than otherwise. A smart round of pistol-shooting was going on, the echoes of which rolled away in muttered thunder among the rocks, like the sound of the bowlers whom *Rip Van Winkle* saw in *Sleepy Hollow*. At last we came out upon the cliff, which we had been now climbing during a hot half-hour.

The Ross-trappe is a bare and splendid piece of rock, challenged from the other side of the narrow rift, through which foams the Bode, by many no less wild and lofty crags,—the Devil's Ballroom, &c. &c.,—and set round with spires, and needles, and strangely balanced lumps of rude stone, thrown about into the most extravagant attitudes, and menacing each other from point to point. On the flattened platform at the top of the cliff where I stood, are two or three large indentations. There is a goodly legend belonging to these, of a Princess Cunigonda, pursued by a ravisher or fiend—perhaps both, and the miraculous leap of a horse, which either saved her or destroyed her rescuer. That I retail this after dear *Mrs.*

Nickleby's fashion is not the fault of my *Flibbertigibbet*—for he shouted it out at the top of his lungs, as loudly as if I had bespoken the tale to try the echo withal, in place of the pistol and the cannon-shooting which is performed for those delighting in sudden noises. But I was looking up the valley of the Bode too busily to heed him;—following the long horizontal lines which seam its grim slanting crags, so thickly feathered with fir-trees, and watching far down in the dark chasm the whirling water, which gleamed among the bushes like a shaken diamond chain, boiling more and more impetuously in proportion as it is near the Bode *kessel*, or spring, where it wells up into daylight. After lingering a long time on the summit, and picking out the town of Quedlinburg, and the eight towers of Halberstadt in the distance, we hurried down a rude path, to the great discomfiture, I fear, of a timid young lady and her party who were ascending. She had taken off her bonnet, so as to display a fine crop of bright orange-coloured hair, and had divested herself of her shawl, and her gingerbread-coloured knit mittens (the product of her own industry doubtless), that neck and bosom and arms might

be dyed to match. Why, by the way, the young ladies of North Germany should affect this unlovely colour, is a point of taste as difficult to account for as the frequent love of a red umbrella among their old men, which must make it a miracle to keep turkey-cocks in a good temper in any German town. Another no less national figure was perched like a bittern at the water's edge far beneath us. His wide straw hat, blue shirt, and carnation-coloured silk neck-handkerchief, setting off his jet-black beard, scarcely made a brighter spot of colour among the sober-hued stones where he had fixed his seat, than the flagrant landscape on which he was at work. There was the old caricature of violet hills and orange trees and China blue water which may be seen on any French paper, drawn out in all its tawdriness, just as confidently as if Nature with all her delicious hues and shades had not been before and around and above her libeller. He was better employed in biting at the long sausage with which his mouth was half full, than in libelling green foliage and gray rocks. Presently he, too, was shut out; and we went over a Devil's Bridge towards the last attainable sta-

tion overlooking the *kessel*, or caldron. There are many scenes of the kind on a grander scale; but I doubt whether I could have been more delighted by a sight of Niagara itself, than by watching the ceaseless brewing and seething of those brilliantly clear waters which have *folded*, not worn, the stone around them, till, in its forms, it takes the easy roundness and play of drapery. It was impossible not to wish to advance beyond the station at which the rude path comes to an end,—an almost perpendicular rock blocking up the valley just above the source of the stream. And accordingly, in spite of *Flibbertigibbet's* remonstrances, I started off on such a scramble through briars, stones, and hazel-bushes, as I have not undertaken since tracking the course of the brooks which, falling into the Lune above Lancaster, run through some of the loveliest rock-scenery in England. All would not do. Vexatious as it is to mortal self-conceit to be circumscribed by those who *lay out* the haunts of Nature to the utmost advantage, after half an hour vainly spent in attempting to obtain a nearer glimpse of the caldron, the roar of which took at last a positively malicious tone, the feat was abandoned as

an impossibility: I turned back towards Blechhütte, there to take vehicle for Quedlinburg.

The drive to that clean-looking town, and the drive thence to Halberstadt, offered little to be remembered, save the renewed strength and spirits with which one who has "been long in populous cities pent" looks back to such a ramble as the one here journalized. But enough —I remember Byron's caution to Moore, when they stood together overlooking the Venetian sun-set, "not to be poetical." I remember, too, that my reader is bound for the music of Berlin. Should he ever take a Harz ramble, I cannot wish him better weather than shone during my three glorious days, a more capital charioteer than Carl Alhelm, or keener feelings of enjoyment than those with which I relished this little episode of open-air life and wild scenery, in the midst of a never-ceasing course of "shining theatres," with their heavy atmospheres, and their gross illuminations, and their tawdry mockeries of the real shows and splendours of earth and heaven.—Those have already ceased to love Art, who have lost their comprehension of and affection for Nature.

GLIMPSES OF BERLIN

IN 1839-40,

WITH MATTER CONCERNING A LATER PERIOD.

GLIMPSES OF BERLIN

IN 1839-40.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS—"DER FREISCHÜTZ."

A peep at a fair, and at the Cathedral of Magdeburg—Arrival at Berlin, changed since the days of Burney—First impressions of Berlin—The splendour of its buildings—Musical anticipations—Display at dinner—The afternoon of the Germans—"Der Freischütz" at the *Schauspiel Haus*—The manner of its performance—The cast of the opera—Mademoiselle von Fassmann—Disappointment—The metropolis of criticism—Morning visits in Berlin—Rumours and qualifications—Partizanship—The Fassmann and the Löwe—Voltaire and Burney on the Berlin spirit—*Mrs. Grundy* and *Mrs. Candour*—Absence of form, and absence of sincerity—Scene at a German supper-table.

WITH the exception of the damsel, who stood under the vine-hung porch of the post-house at Egeln, to show the splendid flaxen ringlets which were gathered up at the back of her head

by a massive silver bodkin,—there was little to be admired for the first six hours after leaving Halberstadt, by the *schnellpost* which ran between Cologne and Berlin. At Magdeburg, a mid-day halt of three hours gave us time to assist at the opening of a *Kirmesse*. This would have been gay and pretty, but for a hurricane of wind, which raised clouds of sharp stony dust, to the laceration of the skins and the blinding of the eyes of holiday-keepers. The cathedral, too, was to be seen; one of the finest buildings of its class in North Germany. The front is very complete, and its two graceful lantern-towers, with the noble window between them, have a certain originality in the combination of their Gothic details I had not elsewhere encountered. The building had been recently repaired, so that the alabaster pulpit, by Sebastian Extel, and the tombs of Kaiser Otto, and Editha of England his wife,—a pair of stately sitting figures,—and Peter Visscher's exquisite Apostles in bronze round the monument of Archbishop Ernest, were not dishonoured by being lost amidst the dust and mildew which make so many an ancient building desolate rather than venerable. Perhaps the

piers of the magnificent nave were too brilliantly white and too trimly neat,—perhaps the arabesque paintings of the western chapel, where the Archbishop's sepulchre stands, were too glaring in their renovated tawdriness, not to shock an eye in those days little used to polychromy. Or it may be that there is little comfort in a *snatch* of a fine building thus laid hold of in the midst of a journey. The spirit of such a stately church tempts the foot to linger, and demands a mind not urged onward by anticipation. The *cicerone* of Magdeburg Cathedral was at once the most exacting and mechanical of the tribe I had then encountered in Germany,—possibly he had been disturbed in the midst of a jollification. At all events he smelt most fiercely of brandy, though it was scarcely one o'clock in the day.

The above laconic note, with a word or two in admiration of the panorama of strong works, and zig-zag fortifications, girdling one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, which may be seen from the tower of the cathedral, are all that my journal records of Magdeburg. Thence to Berlin was a blank, only broken (before railroads were) by a coarse and greasy supper

at Genthin, and by a guess or two at the wide and naked splendours of Potsdam, through which the *schnellpost* passed an hour after midnight. One could hardly make a less interesting journey of fourteen hours; and it was with feelings of no common relief that I felt our vehicle slowly rumbling to its full stop somewhere about seven o'clock A.M. in the yard of the post-office, Berlin. From thence to the Hotel de Russie the transfer is short and easy.

Modes of conveyance and usages had changed with a vengeance since the year 1772, when Dr. Burney made the capital of Brandenburg a principal station in his musical pilgrimage. The night before he reached Berlin, he remained, as his own agreeable journal tells us, for seven cold, dark, wet hours, stuck fast in a bog, on a bleak and barren heath, between the last post-house and the city; and on arriving, after having been detained for three-quarters of an hour at the barrier, was conducted, under custody of a sentinel, to the custom-house, to abide another detention of two hours. It would have been only natural, if all his life long he had hated a place of which his first impressions were so repulsive. Thanks to the activity of Herr von

Nagler, roads in 1839 were smooth, and conveyances punctual and commodious. The liberality of the times had reduced the inquisitorial proceedings of the custom-house to a cursory and civil examination on the frontier: there was, then, no excuse for bad humour—call it even by the convenient name of low spirits—on the part of the traveller entering the Prussian metropolis. Yet my first feelings in Berlin were those of depression.

The finest of modern cities is like a beauty in a ball dress, and should never be first seen (let the Wordsworths write what sonnets they will) by the light of very early day. However striking be the repose of that hour, the want of welcome to a stranger, in the total cessation of life and bustle, is chilling to the heart. Bodily weariness, and the reaction after much pleasant excitement, had of course their part, in the first indifferent glance which I cast at the spacious old palace, the arsenal, Schinkel's far-famed museum, and his square flaring *Bau Academie*. The last, built of a dull red brick, and traversed by pin stripes of lilac tiles, introduced on most original principles of concord, reminded me of a huge bale of one of those coarse and

tawdry calicoes which are manufactured for the Mandingoe or Eboe market.

All pre-occupation apart, however, there is a certain coldness in the physiognomy of Berlin which never wholly passes away — morning, noon, or night; a frigid and academical splendour in the new edifices, which makes the eye long for a bit of dingy antiquity. Mine, at last, found a positive delight in resting on the group of corrupt and heavy oriels and bell-towers of the palace, overhanging the water on the side of the Long Bridge. The mathematically straight, wide streets, lined with noble houses, are beautiful; but it is the beauty of a set of regular features without variety of expression, where fancy has nothing to discover. The Linden, of course, is an exception; and there are few things more splendid than that long avenue, closed by the magnificent Brandenburg Gate, with the masses of forest in the Thiergarten beyond, especially when seen by such brilliant and mellow moonlight as shone in September, 1839.

If the Prussian capital, in right of its modern Greek buildings, is the Mecca of many a German architect,—Munich being his Medina—it

had been to me, musically, long a Holy City. While half dozing on my hard sofa, half watching the ceaseless gleaming of the fountain in the Lustgarten, I had dim dreams of Mara and Milder; I remembered that Sontag had burst upon the world of her adorers from Berlin. I had been told before I left England wonderful things of Mademoiselle von Fassmann, who was in 1839 the star of classical opera. I had heard at every table from which I had eaten, since I came into North Germany, of the grace and consummate brilliancy of Mademoiselle Löwe. I anticipated the utmost orchestral and choral perfection, and hoped for "Iphigenia," or "Armida," or "Fidelio," or "La Vestale,"—to say nothing of such good new German operas as might be considered worthy of metropolitan honours. Of course I called for a play-bill with my breakfast; and, in spite of fatigue and indisposition, it was with a leaping-up of delight and expectation that I saw the announcement of "Der Freischütz," to be given that very evening at the Schauspiel Haus, —with the identical Mademoiselle von Fassmann for the *Agatha* of the opera.

The morning was spent in a pleasant hurry

of spirits; in familiarizing the eyes with the principal sights of the city, and in learning how heartily its inhabitants accredit letters of introduction. That day's dinner, too, was amusing: it furnished materials for a scene in an unwritten comedy of "Display." At mine host's right hand sat Herr ——, the singer, calling for champagne betwixt mouthful and mouthful, and boasting of his *bonnes fortunes* with a no less amazing prodigality. There was such an incurable twang of the stage *Leporello*, however, in every word of his gasconade, and in every name he announced, as to make his adventures at every listener's service amusing rather than credible. Perhaps, my entertainment in the bustle he kept up was not lessened from observing how seriously he traversed the intentions of one of my dear countrymen, who was equally resolved to shine, but in another fashion. With him, it was all "my dinner with the Crown Prince;" "the day we spent with the King;" "my breakfast at Count Raczynski's;" and "what I said to him about my own place in ——shire!" Never was greatness thrust upon a guest more willingly shared with the public of the highways and hedges. Never was victim—

like *Mr. Lofty* deprived of a single moment's breathing-time by the importunate claims of the great and the influential—more willing to tarry and (to quote the American who misquoted Mr. Rogers' lyric to the poet himself)—

"*show his tale*
To every passing villager."

Not far off sat a less showy pair of contrasts. One was a middle-aged English gentlewoman; the civilest, most untravelled, most precise of single ladies who ever came to Berlin to place her nephew at school. Sore bested was she with foreign usages, curtseying with a nervous dolefulness of expression when she entered the saloon; mistrusting every dish that was set before her; and, with almost tears in her eyes, recalling the wholesome roast and boiled of her own kitchen, as mess after mess of disguised vegetables passed round (the Teltower turnips, a notable Berlin delicacy, among the rest), or as sweets and savouries were shed on her neighbours' plates in strange admixture. There was a life's training under Chapone and Fordyce in her reserved acceptance of the courtesies of her cavalier and neighbour. He was a blithe, shrewd-faced, loquacious inhabitant of the town, who in very fair

English expatiated upon every use and custom, great and small, of German life and manners, till her poor head, I am sure, must have been utterly bewildered. *Sancho* in *Barataria* had not a worse time of it under the restrictions of his physician, than the victim of my neighbour's civility among the meats and drinks of the Hotel de Russie, which he pressed upon her, in spite of herself; and when, in the midst of an elaborate dissertation upon this and the other Professor's method of teaching (how far from the *Reading-made-easy* studies of her own scholastic experience!), he fairly took the good-natured freedom of jointing the leg of a pheasant on her plate with his own knife, the bewildered gratitude of her wintry smile, and her "Oh, dear sir!" "Thank you, sir!" was almost too much for any by-standing nerves to bear. The repast ended in the gentleman's insisting upon esquiring her to see Seydelmann* in Schiller's "Don Carlos." She was

* To sketch Art in Berlin at all, without mentioning this admirable actor, would be an absurd omission; the more so, since his name is not mentioned, so far as I recollect, by any of the travellers and critics who have done so much to draw English attention to the theatre of modern Germany;—not even by that elegant and thoughtful writer, Mrs. Jameson. When I saw him first, it was in a translation from the French, as *Molière* the

to be shown everything. No German ever leaves a sight unvisited: and hers was one of the cases in which total ignorance of the language made but little difference. But, from this perplexing civility, the good lady seemed eager to escape, and with the air of one by no means sure that even harder inflictions would not be attempted. I found afterwards that she had a tapestry frame in her own room; and that, like a good work-woman, she had bound herself to complete her task of so many square inches there every day!

The early dinner hour in Germany leaves a

Lover: and the perfection of his style, as regards *finesse*, demeanour, and the power of saying everything while saying nothing in the common conversational tone of society, made me so completely forget the difference of their languages that I wrote—"I would give anything to see him with Mars." His *Philip of Spain* was described to me as no less Spanish than his *Molière* was French. His *Mephistopheles*, again, was thoroughly pandemoniacal. In short, he seemed to me the only German actor, among those I encountered, whom the schooling of attitude, gesture, and diction, to which the theatrical aspirants of the country laudably subject themselves, had led wholly to the desired result—the easy and vivid simulation of Nature, the life-like completeness of the figure, without a stray chisel-mark. I cannot remember a single point made—a single attitude indulged in: but I know that he *was* the being he set himself to personate, and not "Seydelmann in the part of ——."

Since the above note was written, Herr Seydelmann, like so many of the artists to whom my journals refer, is gone.—1853.

peculiarly profitless chasm of time before the early theatre.—There were sociable coffee visits, to be sure, principally confined to the ladies, which might be paid; or, following a male Berlin fashion, one might drop into Kranzler's, or Stehely's, to toss over the papers and to eat something; but, for a traveller's purposes, the afternoon thus spoiled is next to worthless. Energy itself cannot rummage libraries and look at pictures, when the heaviest meal of the day remains still undigested.—So I sauntered up and down the Linden, which was as vacant of foot-passengers as our own Bond-street of equipages in the month of September; peeped into Asher's to see what English books were most in request—finding, by way of reply, a heap of annuals new-fledged in scarlet and gold—and read the permitted dole of intelligence in the journal of the day, till it was time to be found in my *sperr-sitz* at the Schauspiel-haus. I had been forewarned at dinner that I was not to look for a very grand representation. Many of the singers and half the orchestra were then at Potsdam with the camp, in attendance upon the grand autumnal review; and the opera was therefore given on a small scale in the smaller theatre. Still, to hear "Der Freischütz" in

Germany was something. The sensation made by that work throughout Europe had excited one of my first musical yearnings; and the zeal with which I had in old days trudged after barrel-organs in the streets, to catch up the Hunters' Chorus, and had risen at sunrise to pick out the waltz on the pianoforte, came back like feelings of yesterday. It chanced too, that, save the overture and the great *scena* for the *soprano*—which, after all, is hardly a concert-song—I had never heard any part of the opera decently performed. Therefore, having taken a hasty look round, and satisfied myself that the theatre (another of Schinkel's works) had a grand classical comfortless appearance, in spite of its limited scale; and that the two huge heads of Tragedy and Comedy, set like cameos half the height of the *proscenium* pillars, cut the perpendicular unpleasantly, I composed myself to enjoy the most delicious of all musical prologues to a goblin tale —more than I had ever enjoyed it before.

The overture began: I was at last hearing it played in Berlin style. Numbers may give tone, but they do not surely influence the intelligence of the conductor, communicated to his band. The body of sound, too, was quite full enough

for the size of the theatre. But *was* this Berlin style? Could it be that the quartett of horns in the introduction—music recalling the rich wood-scenery of some of Tieck's *märchen*—was allowed to plod through its work, with only the coarsest lights and shades *rubbed in*, as one says of a painter's sketch? Were my ears, or they, out of tune? I thought of Herr von Raumer's dictatorial demolition of our London music, and of the sneers lavished by him in his English and Italian journals on all performances save Berlin performances—on all singers save Berlin singers—drew my breath, and listened again. It was past doubt; the horns *were* lazy and false. Greater disappointment I have not often felt; nor was the rest of the composition wrought up in a manner to reassure me: the close, in particular, wanted firmness and animation. One does not go to Germany to hear people *play together*; and to say that the overture went correctly is tantamount to praising the Lancashire chorus singers for going through the "Hallelujah" of the "Messiah" without utterly breaking down. So largely, however, did I distrust my own impressions, that, had I not afterwards enjoyed the realization of my

beau idéal of German instrumental performance to the fullest completeness, and had had many opportunities of confirming my judgment of the Berlin orchestra, I should have torn this page from my journal.

Yes, not only was the tone of the band fatigued, rather than crisp or mellow; its execution was characterless and slovenly. Up went the handsome green curtain, with its classical devices, and the business of the stage began. The hero of the opera was Herr Eichberger; the *Caspar*, Herr Blum; the *Kilian*, Herr Mantius—the last, highest in rank among the singers; yet, according to the sensible statutes of German management, taking a secondary part, and doing his best with it, without apparent condescension or reluctance.* Himself excepted, there was not a *solo* singer on the stage who did not sing with an impaired or inferior organ. Finish of style there was none;

* A friend of mine encountered *die grosse* Schröder (so the Germans delighted to call their Siddons) behind the scenes of the theatre, one evening when "Romeo and Juliet" was to be given. She was dressed for her part. "How?" exclaimed he, in true English surprise. "*You* going to play '*Lady Capulet?*'" "I think it an honour," was her simple answer—the answer of a true artist.

nor those traces of vocalization which give the most wretched Italian artist a certain air, and a certain hold on the attention; and yet where has style a fairer opportunity for display—where a well-trained voice—than in the two *cantabiles* which relieve the great tenor *scena?* Blum's *Caspar* was rough and hearty—a touch too broad in its buffoonery; and this was all the more strongly obvious from the generally careless and somnolent tone of the performance. The enthusiasm of hope did not, however, quite forsake me till the second act had brought forward the favourite of the Berlin classicists, whose attitudes the sculptor Rauch used to send his pupils into the theatre to study. Let every one distrust a singer who is described by her attitudes; nay, and even an actress; for a succession of skilful arrangements of figure and drapery surely as little makes a personification as a collection of descriptive passages in verse constitutes a drama. But I had been too often provoked by the indifference of our vocalists to everything save the show-off of the crude natural voice, to make just then the due distinction. On the stage, Mademoiselle von Fassmann was a magnificent *blonde;* and when she wore her hair

arranged in rich Vandyke ringlets on either side of her face, seldom has a *blonde* presented a more effective appearance. Her voice must have been a powerful *soprano*, the natural toughness of which had never been wrought out of it by practice. In all passages of the least volubility she was totally inaudible, or so languidly heavy as to destroy every idea of time; but the purity and truth of her organ were gone; its middle tones were false; its high notes, when forced, were thick and harsh. It seemed as if in all passages of excitement or animation, her physical powers became utterly extinct; and though her postures were separately graceful and picturesque, I could not but feel the total want of that electric warmth which would have made even an awkwardness welcome for the sake of a sudden burst of feeling. Musically speaking, her performance was bad; dramatically it was elaborate and wearisome. The *Annchen*, Dlle. Galafres, was beneath dispraise. The audience was scanty and (no wonder!) sluggish.

I was as much puzzled as disappointed. Sedulousness and care in performance had been, till then, believed in by me as an integral part of the musical creed of Germany. It could not be

because "Der Freischütz" was a familiar work, and belonging to a class the interest of which must exhaust itself in a limited period, that the orchestra played so disregardfully, and that the singers were so far behind the Brunswick corps in spirit and unity of purpose. Nor was it fair to my own star to believe I had stumbled on the worst night of the season. All that I afterwards heard and observed in Berlin — all that I have since learned concerning its in-comings and out-goings—furnished me with an explanation of my disappointment, which, right or wrong, comes too strongly before me not to be stated.

Berlin is notoriously the city of criticism—one must not say of pretension, seeing that a Zelter presided over its music—a Rahel (Madame Varnhagen von Ense) has adorned its social circles—and such professors as a Waagen have been charged with the care and classification of its works of art. But when a critical spirit, from analyzing facts and principles, condescends to the care of persons and events, temper and pique are apt to have something to say as well as judgment. So kindly do the inhabitants welcome strangers; so delightful (in spite of

its touch of precision) is the tone of their society —intellectual without ostentation— that I cannot but wish they were kinder to each other. To pay a round of visits in 1839 was like dancing the egg-dance, where at every step you are in danger of breaking a shell, and leaving a stain. If I asked, with a natural interest, about Madame von Arnim, whose published correspondence with Goëthe gives her a claim to be numbered among the distinguished women of her country, a dozen voices made haste to assure me that her letters were no "Letters of a Child," and attacked her reputation with that weapon most odious to woman—a calendar of dates! Who ever thanked the Quarterly reviewer for disinterring the "Lynn register" that destroyed our belief in the early authorship of the delightful "Evelina?" If I praised the hospitable attentions of ——, I was chilled by a direct "You go there? It is a hollow house." If I inquired in one quarter for Mendelssohn's music, a dry, "Yes, he had talent as a boy," discouraged a second question.—If I desired to know, in a second, which of Marschner's works were most in favour, "They perform none here," was the certain answer, and as certain a

prelude to some story of cabal and quarrel, which it fatigued the heart to hear. If I wished to be told, in a third, what M. Leon de St. Lubin, who had been a resident in Berlin, had done besides a pianoforte *trio* in G minor, and a quintett for stringed instruments, the knowledge of which made me desire to increase my acquaintance with his music, I got, in return, the fact that he had played terribly out of tune when appearing at Leipsic as candidate for the leadership then enjoyed and adorned by Herr David, — but nothing more.* In every play-going house there was an earnest partizan for Mademoiselle Löwe, or for Mademoiselle von Fassmann. Of this I had a curious proof one evening, when a German translation of Herold's "Pré aux Clercs" was performed, in which the rival queens appeared. The score (how could composer be so thoughtless?) makes their *entrati* succeed each other without pause. First came the Fassmann, attired as the *Queen of France*, in a splendid hunting costume of green velvet. She

* Since my return, I have stumbled upon the titles of two operas, "Die Goldene Fisch" and "Kornblümchen," by this composer. It is vexatious that, even in Germany, one should know so many modern operas, belonging to names of promise, only by their titles.—1839.

laboured through her song, in a manner which showed, beyond mistake, that French music was not within her circle of possibilities. Scarcely had she finished, and received her round of applause from the classical party—applause almost insulting, after the positive demerit of her performance—when forth sailed the Löwe, in all the magnificence of her fine figure, brilliant arch black eyes, and captivating smile, most wonderfully dressed. Ere she could open her mouth—which, by the way, was usually in the first instance to utter some musical falsity—an uproar of welcome broke from the French, or fashionable party, which seemed to make her eyes sparkle brighter, and her form dilate to a nobler height. The Fassmann pressed her hand to her heart, gasped, turned red through her stage-rouge, and did all but burst into tears. We heard the preliminary sob; this she swallowed down; but for the rest of the evening she was inaudible. "Was ever anything like the rage she is in?" cried one of the Löwe's adorers, whose *sperr-sitz* was next to mine. "Delicious!"

This theatrical feud was not the only public evidence I witnessed during my transient glimpse

of Berlin, in 1839, which appeared to indicate that the world both of art and society there was traversed by a network of coterie influences, partizanships, objections, and reserves, so wide-spreading, as well as deep-rooted, as painfully to strike even a bird of passage.—Nor is such character a new one. "Musical controversies in Berlin," says Burney, "have been carried on with more heat and animosity than elsewhere; indeed there are more critics and theorists in this city than practitioners, which has not, perhaps, either refined the taste or fed the fancy of the performers." Earlier even than the date of Burney's visit, "Berlin," writes Voltaire, to Madame Denis, in the same letter which vaunts the beauties of the Opera House, and the noble execution of "Iphigenie en Aulide,"—"Berlin est un petit Paris. Il y a de la médisance, de la tracasserie, des jalousies d'auteurs, et jusqu'à des brochures." Times have changed proportions, I fancy; for I must add, that a reasonably intimate acquaintance with the musical circles of the French metropolis has not revealed the same amount of artistic disunion and vexation of spirit, that three weeks of casual and superficial observation in 1839 disclosed to me in Berlin.

A worse atmosphere for Art than this could not be imagined by its most malicious enemy. What avails putting *Mrs. Grundy* to the door, and opening it to *Mrs. Candour?* What avail freedom of motion, superior ease and familiarity in social intercourse, if a scandalizing spirit be allowed to creep in, and if those who think the most deeply upon Art feel the most meanly concerning its petty precedences and honours,—for are not all precedences and honours petty when compared with the indwelling consciousness of being gifted for high things,—which is the only safe motive and sure solace of the artist? It will not do to dismiss the case with coarse and shallow sneers on the differences—

"'Twixt tweedledum and tweedledee."—

A squabble between a pair of common crowders, who care no more for their calling than its ministering to them a certain amount of gin-and-water, may be thus disposed of; but not a disease which paralyzes the energies of an eager and intelligent population like that of Berlin. I was talking on the subject with one of the most accomplished and acute observers I have known,—a German too,—and remarking how

ill such a spirit of intrigue and evil-speaking in Art suited with the social geniality and absence of form in the manners of his countrymen. In England, I said, where Music had been so long disproportionately considered a mere means of money-getting, one might, indeed, have looked for such narrowness of view; and yet I had never observed any thing at home in degree analogous to this. "No," was the simple answer, "it is not so with you in England; your very forms of society prevent it. Here, the universal necessity of their being laid aside, by every one who wishes to be thought a good neighbour, sometimes brings on hypocrisy; professions of regard and heartiness which are not felt;—and then, the comfort of raising the mask afterwards!"

I have had not a few visible demonstrations of the truth of this remark. One in particular occurs to me—the scene of which was a supper-table at the principal hotel of no matter what Prussian town. The arrival of two of the most distinguished musicians in Europe was sure to be noised abroad in a few seconds; and, ere the soup was gone, a professional of the place made his appearance. Lean, bilious, conceited;—in

an agony to look affectionate and to talk cleverly, dressed with a sort of pedagogic neatness—now he kissed one of the party—now he lavished splendid words and compliments on the other—hung on the words of both, and, with bowed head and clasped hands, received their news as oracles. *Damon* was not more enchanted to embrace *Pythias* than he seemed to be.—This man had *only* stigmatized one of the two in print as presumptuous in his art; and on a public musical occasion been overruled by the other for a like fault!

But the comedy was not done. Enter next my old friend, the identical *Leporello* of the Hotel de Russie, in a fuller bloom of success among the fair than ever. Enter, too, ——, about whose merits as an instrumentalist so much has been said and written. The two had been giving concerts together. More sweet words from *Herr* Professor ——; more extravagant compliments to the last new-comers; more bland smiles at their great-boy play with each other, which had the desired effect of drawing the attention of the rest of the company upon them. Surely, if Charity lived anywhere on earth, it was in that good man's breast! The

concert-giving pair rose to go. They were not upon the threshold when their panegyrist laid his lean hand eagerly upon ——'s shoulder, with a quick hungry look, which would set up *Sir Benjamin Backbite*, and leave something to spare for *Snake*, as he exclaimed, in a loud whisper,—" Well, well, my dear friend, *you* cannot like his playing, I am sure! Do tell me!"

If the artistic intercourse of Germany be crossed by frequent veins of insincerity like this, it accounts for many of the short-comings and deficiencies which, in the theatrical arrangements of musical Germany, for a while so entirely puzzled me, as occurring among a people at once so friendly in manner and so devoted to Art. I could give other anecdotes, derived from my own personal experience, not less illustrative of the truth of my German friend's remark; but a single instance is enough —the smile they raise is one of bitterness. Beyond any general causes of disunion or egotism, there were particular conditions in the history of Berlin Opera, which, I think, tended to bring about the state of unsatisfactory decadence in which I found it.

CHAPTER II.

THE COURT AND THE OPERA.

The Opera House at Berlin—Voltaire's correspondence with Paris—Frederic the Great a patron of art; a despot over art—Burney's glimpses of the Berlin opera—Madame Mara—Zelter's anecdotes of her—Genius and despotism—Frederic the Great's taste in music—Royal patronage—German opera hardly formed in the days of Frederic—The national theatre—German singers—Madame Milder; a short sketch of her—Her popularity in Berlin—Her traditions maintained there to this day—Madame Schröder Devrient—Hoffmann's "Undine"—A word on the legend—Spontini and Zelter; the latter criticises the former—The appearance of "Der Freischütz"—Melody and elephants—The result of Weber's successes nullified—Gradual deterioration of the Berlin opera—Spontini; his unpopularity—His music—His place among the composers.

THOUGH a more oddly assorted quartett of authorities could hardly be picked out than Voltaire, Dr. Burney, Zelter, and the author of the "Ramble among the Musicians of Germany,"—each of them gives his drachma or his

mite of information to those who sought the causes of the state of Berlin Opera in 1839 in its past history. From the philosopher-courtier, the friend of Johnson and Garrick, the worshipper of Goethe, and the pleasant man of modern art and letters, who mingled in his speculations the Hummels of Germany and the Hunts of *Cockayne* with a graceful and good-humoured individuality, we learn different parts of one and the same history.

But a little way up the Linden Strasse stood the magnificent Opera House, where all the splendours of the *French* musical drama were exhibited under the nominal direction of M. le Chevalier Spontini. Though its interior decorations were faded when I saw it in 1839, it seemed to me the handsomest and best proportioned theatre I ever entered; large without vastness, and having that habitable look which is indispensable to the comfort of a place of public amusement, and, perhaps, unattainable in such a building as the Schauspiel Haus, where classical rigour of style is attempted. This was the identical theatre built by Knobersdorf,* one of

* Destroyed by fire in the year 1844, and since rebuilt on a more magnificent scale.—1853.

the chamberlains of Frederic II., with the grandeur of which, in the first days of Voltaire's sojourn at the Prussian court, he delighted to pique his far-away enemies at Paris. Not a few also of his letters to his "*anges*" the Count and Countess D'Argental, and to Madame Denis, contain allusions to its splendours, among the other glories of Berlin. The tournament of 1750 was pronounced by him to be worthy of the brilliant age of Louis Quatorze* —the opera "Phaeton," to be more magnificently got up than anything in those theatres of Paris which had so strong a hold on the philosopher's affections to his dying day,—the scene of *The Palace of the Sun* being beyond all admiration. Madame Astrua, the *prima donna*, had the best voice in Europe; and the

* "You would find it difficult," writes Voltaire to M. le Comte d'Argental, "on the delivery of Madame la Dauphine, to give a spectacle as noble and as gallant as that in preparation here;—a tournament composed of four numerous *quadrilles* (battalions?) of Carthaginians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, headed by four princes, who will rival each other in their magnificence, to take place under an illumination of twenty thousand lamps, that will change night into day; the prizes to be delivered by a lovely princess, before a crowd of strangers assembled to witness the spectacle. What is this but the age of Louis Quatorze revived again on the banks of the Spree?"

music was very good. How should it be otherwise, when these pomps and splendours emanated directly from a King, "in every respect like Marcus Aurelius, save that Marcus Aurelius did not make verses, and that his prototype does, and excellent ones, when he gives himself the trouble of correcting them:"—a King (to quote from another *couleur de rose* letter of the same period) "who fights like Cæsar, thinks like Julian, *and gives me an income of twenty thousand livres and honours also, for supping with him!*" Alas! could the last be the reason why Philosophy should extol valour and liberality in his royal pupil and flatterer? It seems so; and shortly afterwards the "*mais*," indicative of a sense of hollowness and dissatisfaction, which would even then creep into Voltaire's letters to Madame Denis, became an exception too potent to admit of his remaining any longer in so brilliant a court, and under so peerless a sovereign. The King had begun to talk of "throwing away the orange as soon as he had squeezed it dry,"—the Mentor was become weary of "washing dirty linen"—so Voltaire contemptuously styled the literary assistance rendered by him to the Marcus Au-

relius, who made verses, and was too royal to correct them. Nine years afterwards he was not ashamed to record his change of note yet more decidedly. The "Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. Voltaire" give us the thread ends and the coarse canvas of the tapestry with a vengeance! What availed the splendid Opera House,—its boxes supported by Caryatides,—if the sovereign who built it lorded it there after the fashion of a Tiberius? The panegyrist turned satirist informs us, that the King's favourite *danseuse*, La Barbarini, had been carried off from Venice by his soldiers, though anything but a Helen;—so depraved was the monarch's taste. And we are not told that the *quondam* Julian lavished upon this unworthy fancy a thousand *livres* of salary more than he had accorded to the "orange he had squeezed," and the "washer-*man* of his dirty linen" in the chaste retreats of Sans Souci,—till the bitterness of the reproach had been already secured by an earlier paragraph. For there we read, that this greatest of Kings showed little grace to his ancient favourites;—and only rewarded with a pension of seventy crowns the poor Madame Sbommers, his first love, who had

played the harpsichord to the heir-apparent's flute in his young days, and for her complaisance had been flogged by rough old Fritz, his father! Too much of the weakness of humanity is displayed in these humiliating exhibitions of spleen, to make us wish to linger with them, though they have a value and a bearing as regards the history of Opera in the Prussian metropolis.

Notices, however, yet more directly significant, are to be found concerning it in Dr. Burney's Journals. He visited Berlin, some twenty years after the reign of Voltaire, when the monarch, beginning to be a "little scant of breath," was harassed by the long passages of brilliant execution which Quantz had written to close the *solos* in his flute *concertos*. The historian's musical eyes discerned that Art flourished there in an ungenial fashion. It was bid to hold up its head and step out, in the straight lines of parade and form, just as the King pleased!—Music, in short, was under a military despotism. The King was at the whole expense of the opera; the public being then admitted *gratis;* and at six o'clock in the evening the monarch took his place in the pit, close to the orchestra, behind the *maestro di*

capella, overlooking the score, and rebuking any of the singers who should chance to make a flourish, or change a note in the music. The poor humble vocalists! What could come of such cast-iron severity, but a monotonous baldness of execution? The orchestra consisted of fifty performers (two harpsichord players among the number): the singers were, Signora Agricola, wife of the composer, and fifty years of age; Signora Gasparini, a yet more ancient wonder, inasmuch as she was seventy-two years old; Signori Concialini and Porporino, and Mademoiselle Schmaling, afterwards *the* Mara.

What a pity it is that we have been defrauded of the memoirs of the life which that eminent songstress told Zelter, in 1829, that she was designing to write, though late in the day, for she was then eighty-one years of age! The personal incidents of her long artistic career must surely have been interesting in the hands of one who remained to the last, as her friend and panegyrist assures us, "characteristic, self-dependent, and peculiar." The memoir by Rochlitz, in his interesting work, "Für Freunde der Tonkunst," gives us a desire to know more; while the following passage from Zelter's cor-

respondence with Goethe is too curiously connected with royalty and art in Berlin, not to be welcome, independently of its anecdotical value.

"She came hither," says Zelter, "in 1771, from Leipsic, as Mademoiselle Schmaling, and made her *début* in Hasse's 'Piramo e Thisbe,' at the same time with Concialini,—to the King's astonishment, who, at first, would hardly deign to hear her, as her paternal name sounded far too German for his ear. From that time to 1773, she sang here in the carnival operas 'Britannico,' 'Ifigenia,' 'Merope.' Then she fell in love with Mara, a violoncellist, and favourite of Prince Henry, the King's brother. As the two powers of course refused to sanction a marriage betwixt Berlin and Rheinsberg, Prince Henry's residence, the lovers absented themselves without leave. They were caught, and Mara was despatched to a regiment at Kustrin, where he was compelled to become a fifer. Mara returned to Berlin, and was allowed to marry her. From December, 1773, she sang as Madame Mara in the following carnival operas: 'Arminio,' 'Demofoonte,' 'Europa galante,' 'Partenope,' 'Attilio Regolo,' 'Orfeo,'

'Angelica e Medoro,' 'Cleofide,' 'Artemisia,' 'Rodelinda.' In 1779, in consequence of the Bavarian succession war, there was no carnival; and in the following year, 1780, the married couple secretly absented themselves for the second time.* Again they were arrested; but the King ordered they should be set free, to go where they liked; as he was anxious to get rid of Mara, even at so high a price. This we know from actual documents; but she, our

* The cause of this flight is by other historians ascribed to the following "passage:"—On leave of absence being denied to her when she wished to recruit her strength by a visit to the Bohemian *baden*, the songstress took the resolution of neglecting her professional duties, in the hope of being allowed to depart as worthless. The Czarovitch, Paul the First of Russia, happened about that time to pay a visit to Berlin; and she was announced to appear in one of the grand parts. She pretended illness. The King sent her word, in the morning of the day, that she was to get well and sing her best. She became, of course, worse—could not leave her bed. Two hours before the opera began, a carriage, escorted by eight soldiers, was at her door, and the captain of the company forced his way into her chamber, declaring that their orders were to bring her to the theatre, dead or alive. "You cannot; you see I am in bed." "That is of little consequence," said the obdurate machine; "we will take you, bed and all." There was nothing for it but to get up and go to the theatre; dress, and resolve to sing without the slightest taste or skill. And this Mara did. She kept her resolution for the whole of the first act, till a thought suddenly seized her that she might be punish-

friend, will not confess any knowledge of it, and complains of violence having been exercised towards her." That her Berlin trammels had graven deep traces in her mind may be gathered from a trait noted in Zelter's letters of 1803: "Mara," says he, "is said to have signified, while in Dresden, her wish to exhibit for the entertainment of the Elector; but when she was informed that His Highness in general is pleased to eat while music is going on, she let it be understood that it would be impossible for her to sing while others are dining. This declaration has cost her a hundred ducats, and the Elector an *aria*." When she was in England she had so far followed the natural order by which those tyrannized over become in turn despotic, that, at Oxford, she walked, with all the grandeur of *Rodelinda's* self, out of the orchestra, rather than stand up while "the Hallelujah Chorus" was performed.

ing herself in giving the Grand-Duke of Russia a bad opinion of her powers. A *bravura* came; and she burst forth with all her brilliancy, in particular distinguishing herself by a miraculous shake, which she sustained, and swelled, and diminished, with such wonderful art as to call down more applause than ever. Her disgust, however, at the transaction led, it is said, to a resolution to escape.

The rest of this curious and genuine fragment of biography has its value as further illustrating the state of art and patronage in Berlin. "Mara," continues Zelter, "had become an object of the most universal enthusiasm ever since the performance of the opera 'Britannico,'* in which, as *Agrippina*, she sang behind the scenes the aria 'Mi paventi il figlio indegno!' with a voice of tremendous power, and yet with a maternal pathos that forced bitter tears from my eyes every time I heard her. The piece is a regular *bravura* air, and such as was the fashion in those days: it was as if a thousand nightingales were straining their throats to warble for revenge.—In all tragic parts she seemed to rise a head taller than usual. I never beheld any thing grander than her *Queen Rodelinda*. Connoisseurs censured her for want of action in passionate parts. 'What!' she used to exclaim, 'am I to sing with my hands and

* By Graun, who wrote, be it noted, Italian operas for the gratification of the royal ear. This *bravura* was revived by Mademoiselle Löwe, in 1839-40, and was sung by her in London, during her short visit to England: a poor piece of antiquated display, it seemed, not superior to the obsolete *bravuras* by Lampugnani, and others, which may be found by dozens in old music books.—1853.

legs? I am a singer; and what I cannot do with my voice, I will not do at all.'

"The relation of such a being to her husband was a general subject of compassion. Mara in Rheinsberg abused the Prince's favour in the most gross and public manner. As it was a rarity to hear him play, the Prince had on one occasion, at carnival time, being then at Berlin with his whole suite, and eclipsing with his entertainments the royal *redoutes*, invited the court to hear the incomparable Mara perform. All came but the King, and one other, who was also missing,—namely, Mara himself. At last they dragged him in. He was drunk, and refused before the whole court, in spite of the entreaties of his patron, to play; so that the Prince could not but feel himself publicly compromised. The King regarded the insult as a species of high treason against his consort, who was present; and this was considered to be the cause of his severity on the occasion of Mara's first desertion. . . . . There were many other causes. The fine residence of Rheinsberg, near the frontier of Mecklenburg, was a nest of smugglers, whom no one dared to oppose that loved his life, while they were under the pro-

tection of the favourite. But the King knew very well where the contraband clue was fastened, which extended, by the aid of the court equipages, from Rheinsberg to Berlin. Mara closed his existence here in the most abandoned debauchery, although his wife never wholly forsook him. I once expressed to her my surprise at the generosity of her conduct towards him, when she replied, 'But you must at least allow that he was the handsomest man ever seen!'— Reichardt, too, had continual quarrels with him, because he would meddle with the Royal Opera. The King, for one whole carnival, sent Mara to sleep in the guard-house on the hard boards; where the common soldiers were allowed to play the roughest tricks with him. This nettled Reichardt; and therefore, as a young patronising *kapellmeister*, he wrote a long story to the King on the treatment of old musicians. On this the King remarked, 'I thought I should have thrown the trouble of the opera off my shoulders; and now I have the old plague again, with the addition of one fool more into the bargain!'"

How far "the old plague" complained of was the consequence of mistake and egotism, it were not altogether a loss of time to examine.

In Burney's time, at least, the philosopher-king was abundantly narrow in the choice of his music. The only operas permitted to be given were by Graun, Agricola, and Hasse; and even by the last composer very few. Occasionally, His Majesty chose to write a score himself, which labour,—to judge from the manuscripts of "Il Re Pastore," and of certain marches recently discovered at Berlin,—appears to have consisted in his vouchsafing to scratch down a few melodies upon the ruled paper: noting down his notions of the manner in which they should be completed for Quantz, his musical washer-*man*, to fill up. The latter, however, seems to have kept the peace, and yet gone his own way; for we find that he was independent enough to dare in one composition to give *an upward motion* to certain orchestral parts, in spite of the monarch's pencilled injunction — "Let them descend." "Upon the whole," concludes the judicious Burney, "my expectations from Berlin were not quite answered, as I did not find that the style of composition, or manner of execution, to which his Prussian Majesty has attached himself, fulfilled my ideas of perfection."—What good, indeed, to the free mind of Art could result

from such narrow patronage? What good from the three flute *concertos* played nightly by the royal *virtuoso* at his private concerts, until the loss of his front teeth destroyed the possibility of further trespass upon the patience of the obsequious court; and the King, as Burney tells us in his "History of Music," ceased, therefore, to "take further pleasure in the art!" The manner, indeed, resulting from such paralyzing support, or, to call things by their right names, interference, could hardly fail to be what Burney declares it was — mechanical, and devoid of sensibility. The King's musical presidency, it is needless to point out, tended to a systematic and resolute discouragement in composition of all those national characteristics out of which a style is made. His liberty of conscience meant prejudice against all things grave and ecclesiastical; when he heard of any composer having written an anthem or oratorio, the philosopher fancied his taste was contaminated by it, and would say of his other productions, — "*Oh, this smells of the church!*" He would be French in his opinions—Italian in his ears, and, between the two, German Art, the spirit of which is Belief, and the musical expression uttered in har-

mony more than in melody, stood but a poor chance. The natural stuff of his countrymen is too robust and solid in texture to take the colour with which he resolved to dye it; and hence, in place of displaying that vitality and creative power which we have a right to expect in a great metropolis, the Opera of Berlin was, under the auspices of Frederic II., a formal state machine, as innocent of the warmth of real life, or the poetry of enjoyment, as are the bespoken dithyrambics of a laureate, or the restricted festivities of a diplomatic circle.

For such royal patrons I have often thought that the fittest musical amusement would be the monster snuff-box playing the few chosen tunes, or the puppet-show of the Great Mogul on his throne, with a band to be wound up at pleasure, which the Dinglingers or Maelzels of mechanical invention can construct. It is of little matter whether the romantic, or the classical, or the frivolous, predominates in the composition of him who prefers possessing in art a puppet which can be manœuvred at pleasure, in place of a free and grateful creature, constrained only by love and cherishing to exercise spontaneously the noble powers of creation. A king should

not make of Music either his drill-sergeant, or his fool, or his paramour, lest his people too become towards her tyrannical, or absurdly tolerant, or licentious. The best patronage which those who sit in high places can bestow on the works of genius is by practising the hardest lesson they have to learn—the sacrifice of their own whims and fancies. All honour to King Louis of Bavaria, then, who, in planning his magnificent palace of Munich, desired his architect to build it not merely for himself, but for his children, and for his children's children. Even Louis of France, who cared for little, Heaven knows! beyond the circumference of his ambrosial *perruque* and his velvet mantle covered with *fleurs de lis*, was, as regards music, a better king for the French nation, when providing in *L'Académie Royale* for all those natural tastes and impulses of his subjects out of which styles and schools proceed, than the redoubtable Frederic, when endeavouring in his superb Opera House to feed the German people with French superficialities and Italian airs and graces.

Still, while we remark how the brilliant and philosophical King not only threw back his country's music, but, by the abiding popularity

gained for his name, made a false taste, as it were, sacred, and to some degree perpetual in his metropolis,—it is just, too, to observe, that German Opera had shown few signs of a will or way of its own before the time when Frederic the Great was called away from his piping and patronising of Art to his hard and unadorned tomb in the Garrison Church at Potsdam, whence Napoleon carried off his sword. Gluck's operas, it is true, might have startled him out of his despotic exclusiveness, and he might have hastened to adopt them in the fulness of his Gallomania, seeing that their most brilliant successes were gained in Paris rather than in Vienna; but he loved Italian singers, and these could not abide Gluck's music. At that period, too, Mozart had only just begun to give the world those marvellous compromises where Italian *cantilena* and German harmony combined, to the enchantment of all civilized musical ears. The fame of the Great King, and the love borne to his memory, may, after all, be more largely chargeable with the exotic tendencies of the Royal Opera in Berlin, than his own despotic management and short-sighted tastes. Be this as it may, the national musical

drama, when it began to take a shape and form of its own, was rather for the people than for the court, being performed at the National Theatre. There, however, the arrival of Iffland in 1796 as manager, and his distinction as actor no less than dramatist, retarded the growth of musical taste, by furnishing the public with another species of entertainment, excellent after its kind, and congenial to its taste. Nevertheless, Himmel's "Fanchon" managed to struggle into life, and to circulate thence from Berlin throughout Germany. It is now forgotten: forgotten, too, is the "Donauweibchen" of Kauer—in its day a universal favourite; so are the merry operas of Dittersdorf. To these slighter works the court can hardly be blamed for preferring the *buffo* music of Italy, executed by Italian singers. Yet in the executive department of Opera, too, Germany was becoming richer. In the catalogue of popular operatic celebrities at Berlin,—to turn over which makes one half melancholy, the mime and the musician being among the most signal illustrations of Fame's transiency that the world possesses,—we shall find such names as "die schöne Baranius," "die Döbbelin," celebrated for her performance

in Naumann's "Cora;" "die Unzelmann," praised by Zelter for her agreeable singing and acting in "Die verwandelten Weiber;" "die Schick," and "die Bethmann;" the last, from a pretty singer, having ripened into a great actress; while at the court theatre, Fischer the elder was a *basso* sufficiently excellent to have parts written expressly for him.

Ere Fischer appeared, Reichardt had passed away, who, in 1775, succeeded Graun as *kapellmeister*, and is described to have mounted the Italian opera in a very splendid manner, after the death of Frederic the Great. Reichardt was in turn succeeded by Righini, an Italian, and who composed many works; not, however, more Italian in their style than the operas of the Winters and Naumanns, who chose any writer rather than Gluck as their model. This timid want of nationality among the German composers may probably have told favourably upon the German vocalists. By this time, too, the delicious works of Mozart were at hand, forming a point of universal union, simultaneously satisfying the taste of the court and of all who loved such melodies as could flow sweetly from *la bocca Romana*, and the more

musical desires of a people who were increasingly earnest to find thoughts rather than sounds in Music.

The early period of the present century, then, seems to have been a time of progress and enjoyment for Opera in Berlin. The court and the people, while their tastes kept asunder, were gradually influencing each other,—these to the improvement of the singer, those to the increased nationality of the composer. An untoward fate, however, seems to have pursued German Opera. Mozart died at the moment when he was attaining to a true knowledge of its capabilities; Beethoven's melancholy infirmity, and the disappointments which attended the production of his "Fidelio," limited his stage contributions to that one drama. At the moment, however, when the national repertory of new master-works was in danger of being exhausted, and the national taste of composers, hardly sufficiently assured, ran some danger of being lost among the Italian melodies rather than the German harmonies of Mozart, the evil day was averted at Berlin by the appearance and triumphs of Madame Milder in 1812. For many subsequent years her acting and

singing illustrate the golden period to which all those devoted to German Opera enthusiastically recur. They triumphed, at all events, for a time, above the flimsy court predilections for foreign aid and talent, by which the taste of Frederic the Great—even now represented in a diluted form—has always hindered the national music of Germany from thriving kindly on the stage of its northern metropolis.

This celebrated songstress was, according to Fétis, born in the year 1785, at Constantinople, where her father, a courier belonging to the Austrian court, was upon a mission. Her musical and dramatic endowments,—a voice which has been universally described to me as magnificent, the fullest and richest of *soprani*,—and a person which ripened into a rare stateliness, early attracted the attention of M. Shikaneder, the Vienna buffoon manager for whom the "Zauberflöte" was composed, and who wrote its incomprehensible *libretto*. He placed her under an Italian singing-master, and superintended her appearance on the stage. But she continued to be a singer of Nature's making; for so inflexible was her organ, or so indifferently cultivated, as to be incapable of the slightest

trill or embellishment; and though Mrs. Jameson says that "this magnificent creature never would sing any other than German music," the truth is, that she *could* not. She was, in addition to this, so indifferent a musician, as to learn every part only by having it played again and again to her. But for that, she might have been accepted implicitly as the type of the great German songstress; because the incomparable "Fidelio" was written for her, and also the part of *Emeline* in Weigl's somewhat lachrymose "Die Schweitzer Familie." It was for her, too, I believe, that the operas of Gluck were revived, which make so brilliant a point of retrospect in the history of Berlin Opera, and still form its best and most satisfactory feature. It may be fantastic to presume that the Greek blood which some say ran in her veins had any part, conjointly with the heaviness of her voice, in prompting her to assume the lyrical cothurnus in those splendid dramas; but certain it is, that they were her greatest triumphs. In later years, when the lustre of her voice began to fail, she took the fancying of singing such parts as Mozart's *Donna Elvira* and *Susanna;* but even this music was too figurative for her to succeed in.

How completely Madame Milder satisfied a national desire, in spite of all these technical deficiencies, and the drawback of a manner in society which has been described to me as indolent and frigid even to the unamiable point,* may be gathered from the rapture which she excited—not merely in the court—not merely in the public—but in grave composers and tough German critics. So much for the triumph of Nature! On her first visit to Berlin in 1812, "The voice, countenance, and manner of this young lady," writes Zelter, "have a power, grace, and freedom, especially in the part of

* I have been told that Milder was restrained and ungracious towards children; in this how different from our own stately Mrs. Siddons, who was more than once found, as one of her biographers tells us, "with her magnificent hair let down, playing with a little child, and telling it faëry tales!" A friend of mine, who remembers Milder's reserve, but remembers too her magnificent impersonation of the heroines of Gluck at Berlin, in the years 1818, 1819; was present at a whimsical scene in one of these performances. At the moment when Blum, the bass singer, who used to strengthen himself for the part of *Hercules* upon champagne, was carrying off the colossal *Alcestis* from the shades below, —Queen Milder, aware of the risk she ran in arms so unsteady, and overpowered with sudden terror, exclaimed, "Herr J——! Ich falle!" This exclamation elicited a simultaneous roar from all parts of the theatre. And from that day forward Milder was *led*, not carried, from the stage by the God of Strength.

Emeline, such as we have not witnessed here for a long time. Her singing has been blamed as unscientific; but I find much to praise in it—warmth, truth, connection, certainty; and a kind of Swiss plainness which is displayed in the most innocent manner in the world. At least I have never seen passion represented with such moderation and decided effect." Three years later we find the same writer (by no means a blind and bigoted lover of German singers) lauding her golden voice as "positively belonging to the class of rarities," and herself as "the only singer who gives you entire satisfaction." So popular became this stately enchantress in Berlin, that she settled finally there, till made willing to yield her throne in consequence of misunderstandings with Spontini. Her picture is in every musical house I entered. She must have been a gorgeous-looking woman—the very *Alcestis* and *Iphigenia* of Gluck in her majesty of attitude and the sublime repose of her features; and so entirely did she impress her own statutes upon her subjects, the public, as things not to be departed from, that I have been told that when Madame Schröder Devrient came to Berlin, and presumed to exhibit her-

self in some of the classical characters with less munificence of veil and drapery and more liberality of arm and bosom than her predecessor, it was as distasteful to the rigid Berlin critics as a yard-long Rubini-warble thrust into the midst of "Total Eclipse" would be to the frequenters of the Ancient Concerts. Nay, by a touch of royal despotism, inherited from him who sent his soldiers to fetch him la Barbarini, her unclassicality cost her an engagement. When I saw Mademoiselle von Fassman in 1840, to my ignorant eye absolutely overladen with veil and diadem, chaplet and stole, in "Iphigenie," and remarked to some one on the impolicy of such a disproportionate quantity of drapery, I was answered—and the answer was considered to be final—"Milder dressed it so."

While the Milder was thus possessing the public of the Court-Opera with her classical traditions, the National Theatre was making a step in the advancement of German Opera towards one of its most brilliant periods. This was by the production of Hoffmann's "Undine," in 1816.

The name of this singular man is best known

in England by those terrible or fascinating tales in which Imagination, while walking on the bounds of Madness, still keeps so strong a hold of probability and natural feeling that the reader hardly knows, on laying down the book, which is real—the dream he has been perusing, or the life to which he is returning. Every chamber of imagery, to which creative power has resort, lay open to Hoffmann. He was a draughtsman, as well as a novelist and musician; had tried many professions, and proved many vicissitudes; and hence the marvellous versatility of illustration by the spell of which his tales, if they fail of catching the reader in one paragraph, cannot but lay hold of him in the next; since, in their wildest vagaries, some homely domestic picture, or some feeling we have all of us felt, steals in so imperceptibly, yet so familiarly, as to make its *entourage* forgotten. During the period of Hoffmann's musical career, which included a directorship at Bamberg, and another at Dresden —a career only entered on somewhere about his thirtieth year, when the war of 1806 had driven him from his *Rath*-ship in Prussian Poland—he tried every form of composition. He has left behind him operas, ballets, a *Miserere*, a

Mass, a Symphony, a pianoforte trio, sonatas for the same instrument, and several vocal compositions. Those who know him best by his tales, would be disposed from them to expect what may be called nightmare music. Yet, those who have inspected his works assure me that it is almost tamely regular and unimaginative. To quote a contribution by Herr Truhn to "Der Freihafen" for 1839, whoever opens a score by Hoffmann, with the expectation of meeting in sound all that world of *diablerie* and phantasm which the celebrated author of the "Phantasie Stücke" had entirely made his own, will be considerably disappointed. His music has no where that unearthly wildness which pervades the romantic operas of Weber, Marschner, Lindpaintner, and the gloomy ballads of Löwe and others: on the contrary, it is composed after such classical models as Mozart and Cherubini; and, like their works, dwells in the genuine musical region of sweetness of sound and beauty of form. Even in the music he composed for Werner's tragedy, "The Cross on the Baltic," where he might have embodied all the terrors of the aboriginal forests and their heathen inhabitants, the Scythian rhythms of Gluck, in the

"Iphigenia in Tauris," served him as a model.* Yet, somewhat to mitigate the impression of insipidity or want of enterprise which such a character is calculated to convey, we are told by the same authority that the music for the parts of *Undine* and her uncle *Kühleborn*, the water-sprite, is mysterious and characteristic; that the heroine's songs are for the most part accompanied by the *violoncello*, whence such a manner of colouring as Weber afterwards perfected appears to be indicated—to say nothing of several wind-instrument effects no less novel and romantic. The success of Hoffmann's "Undine" was great—the work having been performed twenty-

* Surely the very Scythian chorus in question embodies as much aboriginal rudeness and heathen terror as any piece of music that could be named. Indeed, on returning to this character of Hoffmann, I might have been disposed to accept it as disproving that which it was written to prove, had not the testimony of musicians more acute and famous than Herr Truhn assured me that such of Hoffmann's music as is extant is singularly tame, vapid, and featureless. Several manuscript works by him exist in the Royal Library at Berlin:—"Julius Sabinus" (an opera in three acts), "Liebe aus Eifersucht" (an opera in three acts), "Harlequin" (a ballet), and "Der trank der Unstreblichkeit" (an opera in four acts), among the number. These were closely examined, not long ago, with a view to the performance of some, or parts of them; but the plan was relinquished as impossible.—1853.

three times before the National Theatre of Berlin was burned down. Since that time it has not been played anywhere, partly owing to the expensive decorations required—those in Berlin cost twelve thousand *thalers*—partly owing to a rumour that the score had perished in the flames, which was erroneously spread abroad.

There may be another reason why "Undine" cannot keep the stage; and why it is as little susceptible of musical treatment as of being frequently personated.—The heroine's character is so delicately and spiritually complex as almost to be exceptional. Exquisite as is the idea of a creature of the elements becoming partially animated with a human soul, it may be doubted whether Music has the power of expressing such a duality, and whether the entire colour of the character must not be left to the interpreting artist. And Shakspeare's *Ariel* itself hardly offers greater difficulties to flesh and blood than La Motte Fouque's fountain spirit. Her representative should possess great personal beauty of a pale, sad, and visionary cast—grace, freaked with a certain capricious wildness—a voice capable of changing every instant from the most caressing and pathetic affection, to that distant,

airy mirth in which mortality has no part. Such a being as this, it is needless to say, is rarely to be found in the world of *prima donnas;* and hence, often and again as the tale has been set,* it has never, and I think *can* never, become a stock-piece on the stage.

Neither the strong influences which Queen Milder exercised in the days of her glory on the stage of the Berlin Opera, nor the production at the second theatre of a work so attractive as "Undine" is said to have been, could break the court habits of taste and preference. The limited extent of the genuine German repertory, and the all-pervading intoxications of Rossini, which, for the time, were strong enough to seduce Beethoven's own townsmen from their allegiance, might have something to do with this. There were no other new foreign works then in the artistic mart so likely to fit a Grand German Theatre Royal, not vowed to its own country, and yet not wholly Italian, as "La Vestale" and "Fernand Cortez;" and,

* Most recently by Lortzing, the well-known German composer of light music, also by Colonel Lvoff, little less known as the distinguished Russian amateur—one of the most distinguished amateurs that has ever appeared.—1853.

accordingly, Signor Spontini, their composer, was invested with the *baton* of operatic sovereignty at Berlin,—such a wand of discord as has hardly ever been wielded,—even in the world of Music!

Not only was a foreign appointment like Spontini's of itself calculated to throw a musical society such as that of Berlin, into the state of perpetual storm, slander, and irritation, which suited best its intellectual activity; but more generous influences were at work which, in due time, produced their fruit. Prussian art, as well as Prussian literature, was beginning to throw off the French stays into which Frederic the Great had forced it, from impulses more honest than those of merely sarcastic antipathy. The people of the town had found a natural development of their own strongly marked musical tastes within the walls of their own *Sing-Académie*. The frequenters of this—the amateurs who had taken part in the *Liedertafel* societies long enough to find out how the national heart beat—the accomplished instrumental amateurs who clung to Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven (a few to Bach), as affording the only true field of pleasure, resented this foreign domi-

nation; not frivolously and vexatiously only, but in good, sober system, and earnest. They might not resist running to see the gorgeous spectacles—the elephants the size of life, and the other stage splendours called forth for the inauguration of the new *kapellmeister*, but they criticised him searchingly in the true Berlin fashion,* and only waited for the moment and the man to declare themselves openly.

* Yet, while such was the tone and temper of Berlin, as regarded Spontini's music, in completion and balance of the picture it must be stated, that a deservedly respected professional and critical authority—I mean Zelter—wrote, and it seems thought, with considerable temper and fairness concerning the interloper and his operas, as an extract or two from his correspondence with Goëthe will pleasantly manifest:—

"*Berlin, June*, 1820.—Spontini has just got his last opera translated into German. He requires for this work forty violinists in the band (not more than half the number being there already), and an enlargement of the space for the orchestra in the Opera House. If the rest of the instruments be increased in proportion, the people in the *parterre* may look for places outside the doors. For my part, I shall not fail to derive some good from observing the experiment, although I plainly see how and where it must end, if the grain which is wrapped in all these folds is ever to be found. . . .

"*July*, 1820.—I have heard Spontini's 'Cortes' twice. The poem is by De Jouy, and much better than the very bad German version which is substituted here. I am disposed to prefer the music to that of 'La Vestale,' but must hear it once or twice

The moment and the man arrived in the year 1822, on the occasion of the opening of the New Schauspiel-haus, and the bursting into day of Weber's "Der Freischutz," then and there represented for the first time. "It came upon us," writes one to whose warrant this sketch is largely indebted for its historical tone, "like sunshine and unexpected good news. There had been

again, as I have gained a kind of general view of the whole, but as yet no fixed point of observation. Single portions are, in reality, admirable; and the dances throughout are good, and full of genius. But what has hitherto confounded me, is to see that an Italian of great natural powers, habituated to great effects, should adapt to great heroical subjects such petty melodic forms, which seem the more unaccountable from being, as regards the instrumental accompaniment, most heavily overlaid. . . .

"*June*, 1825.—I have twice sat through our new twenty-stone-weight opera, 'Alcidor,' by Spontini, which takes four hours in the performance. The music is a work of almost miraculous labour; one must be a thorough musician even to appreciate its amount with the proper measure of astonishment. It is a chaos of the rarest effects, which seem to be striving each to destroy the other, like the singing princes that appear in it, and imply immeasurable diligence in the composer. There is the toil of ten years in the work; and I might fret myself to bits, and still be unable to produce anything like it. The current criticisms are not just to the author; they either condemn the work, or extol it with cold approbation. He has succeeded only too well in what he intended to do: he wished to excite wonder—to amaze; and with me he has fully accomplished his object. To me he appears like the Gold King in the story, who breaks

no puffing and very little talk about it. From the first notes of the overture to the last of the *finale*, it was a brilliant triumph; and not merely for the author, but for all true Germans. When Weber was called for at the conclusion of the opera, and showers of garlands were rained upon him from all parts of the house, there came down also numberless copies of a poem in which he was praised as the man who *gave us music instead of elephants*. The opera was ad-

people's heads with lumps of gold. As musical execution now depends for its success on *ex*cess, the greatest demands upon it are not unreasonable; and the complaints of the people in the orchestra of its difficulty, are a mere nothing to what the ear has to endure in dwelling so long in a labyrinth of sounds, which are at once too attractive and too oppressive to escape from. I have no such power of endurance, and thought that yesterday I should come off more easily; but to-day I still ache all over; eyes and ears, yea, my very skin and bones, are sore with much seeing, and hearing, and sitting. All this is not to be laid to the door of the composer in particular; it belongs to the *time*, which hurries every one to destruction who cannot help being carried away by it. In short, the work is, in all externals, a very remarkable one, on account of the exaggeration of style carried to the utmost pitch, exhibiting power and beauty in *travestie*, and in its real hollowness producing a confusion—nay, an annihilating effect. The parts intended to be melodious seem to me like an outline drawing, in which the contours are perpetually breaking off instead of flowing, and thus wander into caricature."

mirably performed. Madame Seidler was the loveliest *Agatha* one could see. It was popular —I mean in the very streets—as soon as brought out; even difficult portions, like the first air of *Caspar*, being heard everywhere. When I paid a visit to Weber, at Dresden, six months later, in his half-modest, half-ironical way, he raised his hand to the top of the looking-glass in his drawing-room, which was overhung with laurel garlands, and said, quietly—'Die hat mir alle "Der Freischütz" eingebracht.' ('All this has "Der Freischütz" brought me.') The work had then been performed everywhere throughout Germany."

And this very opera was the one I heard massacred with such carelessness in the very opera house where it had first appeared! Had the performance taken place under one of our own theatrical managements, I should not have ventured to assume its mediocrity as typical or significant of the general style; but I had been bidden to look to Germany as the head-quarters of zeal and completeness; and knew that the Berlin Opera is directly under the patronage of the state. There ought, in such an establishment, to be no bad days—no blanks—

no chasms. In 1839-40, there appeared to have been little else for many years, with the addition of snares, pitfalls, and sunken rocks.

Since the days of Milder's departure, and the triumphs of "Der Freischütz," it was universally agreed that the general style of theatrical singing in Berlin had become less and less excellent; that voice after voice had been destroyed, and artist after artist alienated; while the composers of the country, ill-paid, coldly received, and indifferently treated, had gradually shrunk off to their own nooks and corners, there to reproduce the hope long deferred, and the irritation so hard to repress, in the form of humours and crotchets on the part of the active, and of a sullen indolence on those more phlegmatically organized.—Twenty-six years ago, when the agreeable author of the "Ramble among the Musicians in Germany," was at Berlin, the parts taken by Milder in Gluck's operas were supported by Mademoiselle Schechner. She, however, was only a passing stranger; and though a fine actress, though with an excellent voice, was still one of the many whose appearance leaves no traces on the progress of her art.—Mademoiselle Sontag, too, was at that time in full bloom at

the Königstadtisches Theater, but her predilections led her shortly afterwards to devote herself to the Italian stage. Matters had in every way changed for the worse when I was in Berlin. Mademoiselle Fassmann, as I saw her, was a weary distance below Mademoiselle Schechner as she had been described to me. Every visit to the Berlin Opera left me more chilled and more disheartened than the last. Every inquiry received the same rejoinder. That which had been merely comfortable partisanship in the days of Weber, had ripened with time into a settled and corroding hatred, a daily and hourly quarrel, in which too many bad passions were embarked, for art not to suffer, and to have reached the state of pause, if not of apathy, in which I found it in 1839-40.

It is difficult to conceive an artist enjoying a European fame — competence, official distinctions and honours — placed in a position less enviable than the one at which the Chevalier Spontini had arrived about that period. Every musical person in the Prussian capital seemed to make common cause against him, though no two, probably, would have agreed for half-an-hour, as to what celebrated person it would be advis-

able to enthrone in his place. Man and music were alike detested, as foreign *incubi* imposed upon an unwilling public by courtly despotism propitiated by flattery and amused by intrigue, which hindered any healthy development of German feeling, or German enterprise. The same persons, who might be seen obsequiously greeting the composer of "La Vestale," and answering his suave compliments (principally addressed to himself) with compliments no less dulcet, might be heard, the very instant Spontini's back was turned, stabbing his reputation with anecdotes, the envenomed acrimony of which was terrible. It was stated, point-blank, that Spontini had not composed his own "La Vestale," nor "Fernand Cortez,"—as might be proved, of course, by the miserable and progressive inferiority of his subsequent operas, "Olimpia," "Alcidor," "Nourmahal," "Agnes von Hohenstauffen," not one of which had ever travelled a yard beyond the Brandenburg Gate. There were people who could tell, it was added, how the great genius to whom he was indebted had been disposed of; and the malignant *inuendo* would be clenched with "*An Italian, you know!*" the meaning of which (if mean-

ing there was) was strange, by way of an every-day insinuation, ventured in the public street at noon-day, by townsman against townsman. As for such minor offences as favouritism in the making of theatrical engagements, bad influences set in motion to thwart the hopes and injure the prospects of new composers,—tales of these were cherished and disseminated by the million.

Whatever might be the truth or falsehood of all these scandals, it is certain that the Chevalier Spontini did not possess the personal qualities which neutralize antipathy and disarm malice. Singularly courteous and polished in manner as he was, with a full command over the civilest phraseology of old-fashioned diplomacy, I have never met with a musician whose conversation appeared to me more profitless and less engaging—more utterly devoid of instruction, raciness, and national vivacity—than his. For an Italian, he was the driest, most polite, least picturesque man I ever saw. For a countenance which, in its time, must have been regular and handsome, and which was preserved so long as its owner lasted with a lover-like solicitude, I never looked on a face so entirely without play of

expression. Its home-aspect, to judge from the affectionate respect paid to Spontini by those of his own family, must surely have been more winning.—A part of the above peculiarities of manner might, it is true, be referred to the story of his earlier life. His long struggle for theatrical success in France may have done its part, in shutting up,—parching,—tying down and lacing in everything like emotion or impulse: but his nature can hardly have originally been a genial one.—To ask him for information concerning any musical thing or person in Berlin save one, was a labour lost; though he would speak as much as could be desired concerning the number of orchestral players under his call when one of his own operas was to be given; and of the remarkable compass of voice required by the *prima donna* who was to sing in them; and it was hardly possible to avoid smiling at the pleasing varieties with which the same sad story may be told, when the composer added, concerning his later operas,—"They cannot be represented anywhere but in Berlin, because I consider them as something select, belonging exclusively to His Majesty."—Of his "Milton," which he brought to England, as it is well known,

for the purpose of getting it represented, and which could not be given in consequence (among other difficulties) of the licenser's veto, I never heard him speak. That opera, probably, is still extant in manuscript.

It is a very difficult thing to give to a composer, having a history like Spontini, a fair and fit pedestal in the Musical Pantheon—and one neither too high nor too low. Partizanship is sure to enlist itself in the matter; and the *maestro*, who could only get his greatest opera "La Vestale" represented by the express and despotic interference of the sweetest lady who ever intrigued—the Empress Josephine of France—and who, during all his after life, had to maintain his position betwixt the most flattering court favour and the most envenomed hatred among his comrades, can only be rightly valued by an effort of dispassionate judgment such as is rarely demanded. What if he be classed among the Germanized Italians, of whom Cherubini was one and Clementi another, and who have lost, with their nationality, their national *dolcezza* as entirely as certain Italianized-Germans—Hasse, Mayer, Winter—gained it? This will, in part, help us towards a definition: but, it

must be added, that while Spontini had the dryness which, I fancy, distinguishes the piano-forte music of Clementi, and even (in less degree) the magnificent compositions of the greater Cherubini, he has no where shown a science in any respect analogous to theirs. He wrote only opera; and the French love of effect, which has its bad and its good side in musical drama, seems largely to have influenced him, and to have impelled him to try for a lightness, a popularity, a piquancy of rhythm, to which he never wholly attained. His works may be described as skilful, rather than thoughtful—yet, for operas, written in accordance with the modes of the moment, not sufficiently modish—and in this respect outdone by the operas of Meyerbeer, who, whatever he *has not* known, has known thoroughly his time, and the state of his art, in choosing the direction of his quest for renown. A certain temperate eclecticism pervades Spontini's operas, which is often insipid, rarely beautiful, never deep; and because of this, it may justly be feared, they will sink into oblivion, with all the fine things and brilliant moments which they comprise; whereas "Les deux Journées" of Cherubini, and "La Didona Abbandonata"

of Clementi, though less brilliant, and less conciliatory of popular suffrage—and, like Spontini's music, rather dry—will not soon be forgotten.

CHAPTER III.

"COMIC OPERA" IN BERLIN.

French operas in Germany—The pound of tea across the Border —Mademoiselle Löwe—Her cadences—Her demeanour—Her popularity — Her magnificence of costume — Mademoiselle Grünbaum—The *Konigstadtisches Theater*—"Der Bauer als Millionair"—German humour—German opera books addicted to the supernatural and monstrous—Specimen of their subjects —The Piper of Hameln.—Gläser's music—The hybrid school —Lortzing's operas.

"You must wait for our grand operas till the review is over, when the court comes back from Potsdam, and the orchestra is in full force," was in 1839 the unanimous answer to my complaint against the weak and languid performance of "Der Freischutz:"—"They do some of Gluck's magnificently; and Spontini's 'La Vestale' and 'Fernand Cortez.'"—"And which of Marschner's?"—"None." "And Weber's 'Eury-

anthe?'"—"Very rarely:" and out came the hundredth tale of cabal and court predilection. From all I heard, I might as well,—in indulgence of my intense curiosity as to antique German Opera, have bespoken "La Costanza e Fortezza,"—the composition by Fux, performed in the open air at Prague one hundred and twenty years ago, on the coronation of Charles VII. as King of Bohemia; which Quantz described to Dr. Burney as being in the old church style, coarse and dry, but at the same time "grand," and as having "a better effect, perhaps, with so immense a band,* and in such an immense space, than could have been produced by more delicate compositions."

As regarded the slighter German works of the day,—the operas of Gläser, and Lortzing, and Conradin Kreutzer, I suspect I might have

* This opera was performed by a hundred voices and a hundred instruments. There was not an indifferent singer among the principal performers, all of whom were of the first class. Among the six male singers, Carestini is perhaps the name best known. The female singers were the two sisters d' Amberville. The choruses were in the French style, and served for dances; and it was upon the singing in this opera that Benda formed his style. —See *Burney's Present State of Music in Germany*, vol. ii. p. 177, 178.

waited for the return of *King Sebastian*, before I should have been treated to anything of the kind at the Grand Opera in 1839. That its managers, however, did not disdain works flimsy in structure, and unambitious in scale, I had proof in the operas which I *did* hear in Berlin. These were—

"Le Postillon de Longjumeau" - -	*Adam.*
"Le Maçon" - - - - -	*Auber.*
"Le Pré aux Clercs" - - - -	*Herold.*
"Le Domino Noir" - - - -	*Auber.*

What has been said of the "Guido and Ginevra" at Brunswick, applies in even fuller force to these pretty trifles, as regards their effect when translated from French to German. Every one has been told the fate of the first pound of tea that ever crossed the Border: how the good Scottish lady to whom the delicacy was entrusted had it cooked and served up like a vegetable, to the extreme disappointment of her guests, who found the far-famed delicacy "nothing so wonderful after all." Little better treated than this unlucky Hyson or Bohea is the Comic Opera of France, as far as I am acquainted with the result of German attempts to naturalize it. Though more generally relished in

Germany then it was before 1839 in England,—where, indeed, it had been thoroughly disguised under an intolerable grossness of condiment, when not utterly changed past recognition by a destruction of its distinctive taste and texture,—the real *aroma* was not the less lost. And yet, the French comic operas which I heard performed in the Prussian capital had every advantage which Germany could give them—royal patronage, and a company well fitted for their representation, difference of clime and language considered. In three of the works here enumerated, the *prima donna* was the far-famed Mademoiselle Löwe.

She was then in the prime of her powers, and of her popularity; and still was neither a complete nor a pleasing singer. At the time I speak of Mademoiselle Löwe was one of the most ambitious of contemporary florid vocalists, losing no opportunity to exhibit the long compass of her voice, in imitation of the examples set by Malibran; but she was neither exact in tune nor in time. The extreme notes of the scale she hazarded were oftener false than true; the *roulades* she launched were executed with a hurry, betokening anxiety as to their completion,

which totally destroys the charm of brilliant execution. Neither was Mademoiselle Löwe the comic actress that she professed to be. It is true, however, that, as often as I remonstrated against any of her *smorfie*, I was told that her *forte* lay in the passionate and stately tragedy of Italian Opera, — that her best characters were *Norma* and *Desdemona*. For these, her majestic presence, her brilliant eyes, and her raven hair, eminently fitted her. Yet so extravagantly was she applauded by her friends whenever she attempted the drawing-room airs and graces of Auber, and Herold, and Adam, that I began early to suspect that the qualification was an excuse employed to quiet a cavilling stranger, rather than a distinction owned for home use. Had I said, in the pit of the Berlin Opera, that I thought serenity and elegance were wanting to Mademoiselle Löwe's demeanour—had I whispered that marchionesses and court-ladies do not grasp their furled fans in the middle, as if they were tools, not toys, but let them gracefully dangle from the wrist; had I insinuated that in the supper-scene of "Le Domino Noir," where the heroine is obliged to appear in peasant's disguise to baffle the curiosity of a

house full of rakish young *diplomates*, there was a conscious humour and cleverness in her glance, and in her assumed *ton de soubrette*, too natural to the woman to be natural to the situation, which is one of the utmost discomposure and alarm :—Had I uttered any one of these heresies, I say, I should probably have been worse treated than I once was at a Paris *soirée* for presuming to assert that Madame Dudevant (George Sand) had ever wandered about the world in "doublet and hose." Therefore, for the sake of peace, so often as my neighbours broke forth into raptures about one of the Löwe's enormous flourishes, I admired the crown of blush-roses from beneath which it issued; when they found "favour and prettiness" in every one of her motions and gestures, I fell back upon her symmetrical *corsage*, and the sleeve, which was a real *seduisante*. I have never—no, not even in Paris, that paradise of millinery—seen on the stage any one who understood the attractions of costume better than Mademoiselle Löwe.*

* Very shortly after these notes appeared, the public of Paris and London ratified the judgment therein expressed of Mademoiselle Löwe. Resolute to follow the example of Mademoiselle

Less admirable in every respect was Mademoiselle Grünbaum, a sprightly and rather ugly young lady, possessing no better requisites for opera than a destroyed voice, and a complete ignorance that such was the fact. Yet she was vaunted as a star by Herr von Raumer, in his letters from England. Of the male part of the *corps*, Herr Mantius was undoubtedly the best; his voice being then a sweet tenor, and his style more *cantabile* than the style of most of his mates. Herr Blum, the principal bass, was one of those hard-working artists who take great pains and produce very small results; but he,

Sontag, this idol of North Germany relinquished her throne in Berlin, turned a deaf ear to every temptation held out to retain her there, and repaired to Paris with the purpose of taking the Italian stage by storm. In spite of very powerful friends, naturally attracted by a manner sprightly, graceful, and intelligent,—in spite of her German reputation,—Mademoiselle Löwe was allowed to leave Paris without an engagement. She was little more fortunate in London, where she appeared in "La Straniera" and "Marino Faliero," with only a moderate success,—ere the close of her short engagement at *Her Majesty's Theatre* subsiding into the occupation of *Donna Elvira*, in "Don Giovanni." This she sang and acted very well; but the part is a sad downfall for one bent on the *Normas* and *Desdemonas* of Italian opera: accordingly Mademoiselle Löwe passed hence to Italy, where she was more popular, till marriage removed her from the stage.—1853.

too, was entirely worn out. In short, as regards the singers, French opera in Berlin, as in every other German town where I have since met it, —was a dreary and disappointing entertainment. The German orchestras, too, have no sympathy with the music. However correct and careful they be, I have never failed to find them falling short of that smart and stimulating piquancy which belongs to French blood, and to French blood alone. The superficial glitter of the *Opera Comique* (the glitter of a diamond, which, however thin, is genuine) can never be *got up* by German industry and research. Why the trick should have been so often attempted—why the Germans, with all their humour and fantasy, their capital low comedians, their careful actors, and their honest love of the stage, should not have been more able or willing to support comic music of their own,—struck me as strange, till I had weighed and considered matters a little.

This I was led to do, after visiting the *Königstadtisches Theater* in Berlin; in 1839, the third theatre of the city,—and the head quarters of illegitimate drama—to which German comic opera at that time seemed banished. To the musician, this theatre, shabby and dusty as it

looked, was well worth a visit in 1839 on other grounds: for memory's sake, as the scene of Sontag's earliest triumphs—and also as then possessing an excellent resident *prima donna* in Mademoiselle Hahnel,—a lady most unmeritedly shut out of the greater Opera House, I was told, by the express command of the late King. There the entertainments were as miscellaneous formerly as at one of our own legitimate theatres. One night I heard a version of Rossini's "Guillaume Tell," very tolerably performed, though obviously a work many sizes too large for the theatre. Another evening I enjoyed there a "Grosses romantisches original Zauber-Märchen," by Raimund; "Der Bauer als Millionair," a sort of *pot pourri*, made up of domestic interest and faëry sympathy;—the *comedie larmoyante* of Kotzebue, and the broad farce of the Leopoldstadt Theatre at Vienna. This would be as difficult, I suspect, to bring home to the sympathies of a British play-going audience as it once was for me to reconcile a foreign friend of mine to the suitability of a bishop's apron, or as it always is to unriddle the arm-wavings and genuflexions of a *ballet* for those unused to pantomimic narrative. I was

fresh from reading the "Fiabe" of Carlo Gozzi, where the same indefensible mixture of the real and the absurd is effected with so forcible a mastery over feeling and imagination, that *Turandot* and her three riddles, and the *Wonderful Crow*,—with their long line of other marvellous kindred,—can hardly fail to become old and familiar friends, on a first introduction, to all who have a particle of faith or fancy. Hence, besides being amused, I was interested by finding that the German world had not grown too wise to relish *extravaganzas* little less monstrous. The story of Raimund's faëry legend has the same cast as the ever-green tale of "Cinderella:" —there is a cruel father and an oppressed daughter, and the latter is under the especial care of good angels, who, to avenge *Herr Wurzel's* ill-usage of her, turn his house upside down, and his money-bags inside out — deliver her and beggar him. The tale could not be carried on, of course, for popular use, without some sentiment and cookery ;* but in these essentials

* This is not said unadvisedly, but in weary remembrance of more than one "*Lust-Spiel*," where tender talking and coffee-drinking seemed entirely sufficient to keep the German public alive and amused. The fourth and last act of one comedy I shall never forget, in which, after the adventures at a watering-

we were let off easily, and it was kept alive by a fund of humour in a low comedian, Beckmann. Though many of the jokes and grimaces of this kitchen *Leporello* escaped me, enough was left and comprehended to shake my sides in concord with those of my neighbours, and to make me wonder why the familiar vein of German genius is not more largely explored by the caterers for German opera.

That its audiences are not beyond the reach of the broadest drollery, or the most simple representations of every-day life, the theatre of the country bears ample witness. But that the living writers of opera books are not further from the *repartee* or *badinage* which gives its vivacity to French dialogue, than they are from the command over interest and climax which makes even Kotzebue's domestic plays so moving,—is no less certain. In France, that sense of the ridiculous, and touch of the positive,

place of a graceful and coquettish heroine (admirably played by Mademoiselle Charlotte von Hagen) were entirely wound up, a domestic scene of winding silk and eating cakes in an arbour, as accompaniments to the delicate stratagems by which courtship may be protracted, threw every one into ecstasies, and seemed absolutely to be the portion of the evening's entertainment the most relished.

which ever intervene to save the *convenances* of the stage, give a certain point and probability to legends even as absurd as "Le Cheval de Bronze," or as repulsive as "Don Juan de Marana." On the other hand, not merely do the German librettists, when they get hold of a good subject, wander about dreamily and aimlessly among what is intractable and pointless; they appear to consider all the birds of the air and all the fishes of the sea their fair game. The success of Weber's faëry opera was in part ascribable to the national enthusiasm for the supernatural. Not less than four of Dr. Spohr's operas, "Faust," "Zemire und Azor," "Der Berggeist," and "Pietro von Abano," have been founded on legends of the same family. But the vein, besides being easily exhausted, requires consummate skill in working; and the Germans have been long reduced to gather up the scraps, as it were, of the banquet of Wonder, without having learned the art of combination. I will not weary the reader with an interminable list of operas produced since "Der Freischütz," in which sorcery and necromancy, the diabolical and the faëry world, take every conceivable form. To instance the want of selectness of

which I have complained, I need only describe the subject of one of Gläser's operas, which I narrowly missed at the *Königstadtisches Theater*, on my second visit to Berlin. This was "Der Rattenfänger von Hameln;" and as the legend is less known in England than others of its quality, I will even give a version of it, which was said and sung to me in my young days till I knew every note of it by heart; long ere my admirable friend Mr. Browning had written his "Pied Piper of Hameln: a child's story," or published the same among his "Dramatic Lyrics."

The Piper of Hameln.

At Hameln in Westphalia,
Two hundred years ago,
A tragedy was acted
That made all eyes o'erflow.

The Plague in Hameln.

A legion of destructive rats
This town did sore affright:
In vain were all the dogs and cats
To put the foe to flight.

The citizens of Hameln
Were wrought into a fume,
To see such fierce invaders
Their precious grain consume.

* The legend may be found recorded in as ancient a book as the "Letters of James Howell, Esq.," written by him when in Germany (1619).

And as in lamentation
They mournfully bewailed,
Their ears with strains of music
Were suddenly assailed.

The guest.

And soon to their astonished view
The strange musician came;
All piebald was his garment,
And unknown was his name.

His pipe.

Keen was his eye, and shrill his voice,
When from his lips he drew
That pipe, whose loud mysterious notes
Such prodigies could do.

His speech.

"Ye citizens of Hameln!"
The piebald piper cried,
"To save you from destruction
My talents shall be tried;

"And every wild voracious beast
Be put to sudden flight,
If unto me most solemnly
You will your promise plight—

His bargain.

"That I a golden recompense
Shall this day twelvemonth have,
If I return unto your town
The bright reward to crave."

The men of Hameln promise:

Then loud assented every voice,
And promised every tongue;
Whilst loudly did the piebald man
Exalt his wondrous song.

and are delivered.

And as he marched with solemn step
Through the ungrateful place,
The rats, both old and young, did join
In one continuous race.

Nor when a lake appeared in view,
Did they the race refrain,
But 'midst its glassy waters sank,
Nor ever rose again!

Now all was ease, and mirth, and peace; The Piper cometh again—
The year rolled swiftly by;
The piper came his boon to claim.
—His boon they did deny. is disappointed.

Three days he loitered in the town,
Like one full of dismay;
And when these perjured citizens
At mass knelt down to pray,

The wondrous man a vengeance planned His revenge,
For that forgotten plight,—
And piped such wild, melodious tones,
That every infant wight

Pursued his steps, as on he marched,
To catch the lofty strain,
Till not a baby in the town
Did very soon remain.

Each mother's darling urged the chase,
As loud the piper played;
And soon approached a lofty hill,
—No little heart dismay'd,—

When through a chasm in its side,
Each tender infant passed;
And, as it closed its fatal jaws,
The piper gave a blast.

which lasteth to this day.

Nor ever, from that day to this,
Hath he or babe returned ;
But every father, conscience-struck,
The awful vengeance mourned !

The mother's hope, the father's pride,
Engulphed in one dark tomb !—
A pillar, by that dreary hill,
Alone records their doom.

R. C.

It would seem difficult to imagine how the Berlin machinists could make any effect with a story like this; even if one remembers the thrilling interest excited by the flight of the magpie with the spoon in "La Gazza Ladra." But, granting the rat procession to be an equally practicable thing, Gläser is not quite a Rossini. I was told that "Der Rattenfänger" is not the best of his productions. So far as I know his music, it seems to me to belong to the hybrid school, and to be at once dry and flimsy.

To characterize this hybrid school would not be easy—the attempt is hardly worth the trouble. But I fear it must include graver composers than Gläser. The Lachners, and Lindpaintners, and others of the hour, seem to me no less evidently at a loss for a style. And their want of this has contributed to the neglect of the public.

For the blame must not be wholly laid upon courts and cabals, that, during four months passed in Germany, in 1839-40, in towns of every size, each possessing its lyric theatre,—except the aforesaid "Der Freischütz," "Euryanthe" once at Dresden, and Gluck's "Iphigenie" at the "Huldigung" at Berlin,—I did not hear a single serious German opera!

The only writer, ancient or modern, who, to judge from play-bills and papers, seemed, in 1839-40, to have a general as distinguished from a local circulation was Herr Lortzing. I heard, in one place, his "Die Beiden Schützen," founded on a flimsy French *vaudeville;* in another, his "Caramo;" in a third, his "Czar and Zimmermann." In spite of a certain admiration for the versatile cleverness of a composer who writes the words, and sets the music, and plays a part in one of his own operas—which Lortzing did—I could not relish them. They seemed to me as utterly guiltless of genial German fancy, as the music to which Weippert might set one of our own hard-hearted fashionable novels would be innocent of English spirit—to be alike faded and feeble. I could have better borne with the most extravagant melodrame that is told in

music alternately by creeping *tremolando con sordini*, or the hoarse and overpowering blasts of three trombones! Neither the exercise of mastering that which is dry and difficult (which in certain moods of mind has its charms), nor the disrespectable pleasure derived from what is pretty and enticing, though of doubtful *character*, was to be enjoyed in such music by Lortzing as I heard.—If "Le Macon" and "Le Postillon," in their German dress, reminded me of the Scotch lady's tea in a tureen, these indigenous comic operas bore a strong resemblance to the same beverage, as I have seen it exhibited in old-fashioned German villages, where a pinch of greenish-gray dust, in whitey-brown paper, is solemnly laid before the gasping traveller; and the water follows in an open pan, smoking and smoked—where tea in short, is no tea at all!

1853.—Since the above was written, Herr Lortzing has passed away; his death having taken place some few years since. Herr Conradin Kreutzer, too, is dead!—Musically, neither the one nor the other is a loss. Though the "Nachtlager" of the latter may be said to keep

the stage, if only because it furnishes a favourite part for Herr Pischek, it is by right of an indifference on the part of the public—and this is almost less hopeful, as a sign, than undeserved popularity would be.—The light operas by new writers, which have been most universally accepted throughout Germany in later years, have been the poor "Stradella," and the still poorer "Martha," by Flotow—flat music in the French style, without sparkle or science—and certain of the productions of Mr. Balfe. It is difficult to conceive why some among the gay artists of South Germany—such as Herr Mayseder or Herr Strauss—have never tried to throw their elegant melodies and lively thoughts into the form of comic operas easy to produce, and in tune with the sympathies of the public that they have found the secret of charming under other forms. One such writer might exercise an incalculable theatrical influence. Meanwhile grimness, and obscurity, and exaggeration, and a total disproportion of the works represented to the means and materials disposable, prevail everywhere. I have seen the "Robert le Diable," of Meyerbeer, played at the tiny theatre of Freyburg, in the Breisgau—a place of amusement many de-

grees smaller than our St. James' Theatre. There are few tours more depressing—from the prevalence of mediocrity, and the absence of nationality—than a round among the minor opera-houses of Germany, though our tourists have been apt to laud the entertainment because of its cheapness. They have done so without inquiring how far they would be contented with an equivalent in any of their own provincial towns at home.

CHAPTER IV.

QUARTETTS AND AMATEURS.—1839.

Quartett playing—The Zimmermann quartett—Berlin amateurs—The sister and the mother of Mendelssohn—Female musical accomplishment—The *Sing-Academie*—Notice of Fasch its founder—The building—The performances—Spontini's compliment—The decadence of the *Sing-Academie* since 1839.

WHATEVER influences constraint and disunion, patronage capriciously bestowed, and authority turned into an engine of cabal, may have exercised in the Prussian capital to the deterioration of its opera, they have still not been able to destroy a spirit of strong musical vitality, taking forms too exclusively German to be passed over. There was admirable chamber-music to be heard in Berlin in 1839-40 — quartett-playing, worth a journey thither to seek; to say nothing of that magnificent institution, the offspring of Fasch, and the god-child of Zelter—the *Sing-Academie*.

I visited Berlin in 1839, during its flat season, when the amateurs were taking health at some *brunnen* or other, or pastime among that fine scenery which the Germans enjoy so heartily. The court was at Potsdam for the reviews, with its army of fiddlers in attendance. To a Londoner, then, who is accustomed to the utter pause and desolation which September brings—when the one-eyed street musician, who hobbles along his doleful way, scraping out his surgical tunes, is about the only specimen of the genus Violin to be found; when every *Cello* is holidaying it in the provinces, or gone home to Germany to recruit himself; when even Golden Square, that centre of instrumental study, is as guiltless of melody as a Friend's meeting-house—it was a welcome surprise, and an evidence of the wealth of the city, that, at such a stagnant time, to collect a quartett was possible, even to the active hospitality to which I was so largely indebted. Yet more remarkable it seemed, that, when collected, the quartett should be one of such rare excellence as our own metropolis could not then match in the very prime of its fullest season.

Excellent, indeed, was Herr Zimmermann's party, beyond any quartett at that time known

to me. I shortly afterwards heard Herr David lead a similar force at Leipsic, in a yet finer style. Admirable was their rendering of Beethoven's quartett in E flat, No. 11—excellent for ease, breadth, and boldness in the *allegro*—for consentaneous playfulness in the *scherzo;* for deep yet uncaricatured expression in the slow movement.—Then, Herr Zimmerman's party could throw due passion and fire into Mendelssohn's quartett in E minor which followed, with just that touch of old-world quaintness which many of his secondary subjects demand—and lastly, display the requisite French fineness, without French conceit, in the quintett by Onslow—one of Onslow's later and more elaborate works—which wound up the evening.—It was impossible to partake of such a treat without the liveliest and most pleasurable excitement. After all, there is nothing like chamber-music, heard in one's own chair, and among one's own friends,—music that one can at pleasure stop when the spirit grows dull, and that goes on without that anxious straining after effect, of which, in presence of the public, few if any artists are able utterly to divest themselves.

This admirable quartett was only one among

many which, in 1839, Berlin afforded for the delight of the winter evening circles of those who were not sold to the exotic opera, and could enjoy, intelligently, music which, according to the estimation of too many who have fancied themselves amateurs, is of little use save to make "Quintilian stare and gasp." Herr Zimmermann's party would hardly have played the exquisite and widely-varying compositions of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Onslow with such expression, and spirit, and unction, had not intelligence been quickened and study encouraged by the attentive and refined sympathy of their audience. "The amateurs in Berlin," says my pleasant predecessor, the author of the "Ramble among the Musicians of Germany," "are all little *maestri;* they dabble in composition, have most of them the score of a mass, sinfonia, or overture, locked up in their desks, the consciousness of which helps to sweeten their lives, and gives them the smiling satisfaction which Mr. Bickerstaff discovered in the girl who wore embroidered garters." So much as this I had no means of discovering; but I found traces of taste and knowledge every where, and know that they possessed one

amateur *pianiste* and composer of no ordinary force and feeling. I allude to Madame Hensel, the sister of Mendelssohn, whose sudden death (in the midst of her music) gave to her brother's over-wrought nerves and wasted frame, the shock from which he never recovered—which, indeed, hastened his own decease.—This cherished sister, Fanny, had been the companion of the great musician's pursuits, during the years of childhood, in the days when they used to take five-minute lessons together — and in later days, also, when (as I have heard him tell) they vied with each other which could best execute a certain difficult left hand passage in Kalkbrenner's "Effusio Musica" (which, by the way, Kalkbrenner sometimes played as an improvisation). Had Madame Hensel been a poor man's daughter, she must have become known to the world by the side of Madame Schumann and Madame Pleyel, as a female pianist of the very highest class. Like her brother, she had, in her composition, a touch of that southern vivacity which is so rare among the Germans. More feminine than his, her playing bore a strong family resemblance to her brother's in its fire, neatness, and solidity. Like

himself, too, she was as generally accomplished as she was specially gifted.

Now that all are gone, when I am speaking of that most delightful artistic musical circle of Berlin—the one she adorned and animated—it is fitting, and not indelicate, to speak, too, of the head of the family house, to whom Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn owed so much of all that made them charming: the excellent and accomplished mother of the composer. There have lived few women more honourably distinguished than she was by acquirement—by that perfect propriety which Horace Walpole has justly called the grace of declining life—by a cordial hospitality, the sincerity of which there was no mistaking—by an easy humour in conversation, a knowledge of men and books, and a lively interest in the younger generation, which at her age is only formed in the brightest and the best of their species. It is true that she had no common motive for keeping pace with the world of Europe in the fame of her son, and in the brilliant succession of guests whom her daughter assembled,—but, apart from this, she possessed a fund of intelligence, a habit of mind bred amidst constant intercourse with

the best things and persons of all countries, which belonged to herself and remained with her to the last. With such a mother, and such a brother, it was hardly likely that one like Madame Hensel should bury her talents in a napkin, or let them waste. Her morning-music will be spoken of and recollected with cordial regret by all who retrace the story of the art in Berlin during the first half of this century.

I shall never think of the life-size oil sketches taken from life in Rome, which in 1840 adorned the *studio* of Professor Hensel, without recalling the running accompaniment (as it were) of the graceful and solid compositions in which his wife also called up her characteristic remembrances of her Italian journey. And the delight with which she spoke of her brother, and the cordiality with which she welcomed his friends from England, are as vividly present to me now, when I write, as if I had only an instant since seen her bright face (the *Miriam* of her husband's picture),—had only just heard the pleasant racy English, "You will excuse my poor little music of my own," with which she opened her piano.—It will be long before Berlin, or any other capital, can show a musical

circle more delightfully composed, or animated by brighter presiding spirits than that of Madame Hensel.

Generally, however, the solidity of female musical accomplishment in Germany is one of the surest evidences of the deep root which the art maintains in the land. For, be it remembered, this knowledge is found in a society where the housewifery, which has been too largely banished from our female education, is practised with a cheerful self-complacency — where every room bears tokens of the tapestry-working diligence of its female inmates,—and where in every circle the Englishman runs a good chance of being relieved from his uncouth struggles at German phraseology by being addressed clearly and elegantly in his own language. How, in spite of the gratuitous demolition of time, caused by early and frequent and long-protracted meals, the German ladies work, upon chairs, screens, and ottomans, so many scenes from the Scott novels, so many sentences of the Language of Flowers—speak so many languages—and understand Music so thoroughly —is a mystery I am unable to this day to solve.

A splendid vocal testimony to their artistic

accomplishments is the often-adverted-to *Académie* founded by Fasch, and brought to perfection by that good man of Berlin—Goethe's friend, and Mendelssohn's master—the upright, intelligent, and liberal Zelter.

Of the services rendered by the latter to Art, and his claim to be numbered among the worthies of German music, as a man of many gifts and pursuits, from all of which he drew something of aliment and support for the one to which his life was devoted, the English public already knows something. The fund of golden precepts which his letters contain—the honest, zealous, affectionate heart which they display, have in some measure been opened to us by critics and translators. The name of Fasch is less known. It is true that, when Dr. Burney was in Berlin, he was then harpsichord player to Frederick the Great; but some unlucky accident hindered the two from ever meeting; and it is a question whether Burney would have appreciated much in Fasch beyond his fluency of finger upon his instrument. The real musical spirit of Germany, up to that epoch, most strikingly illustrated by the compositions of Sebastian Bach, was but ill comprehended by the courtly and elegant bio-

grapher of Metastasio ; and though the works of Fasch, as far as I know them, be not altogether guiltless of the Italian cadences and flourishes which were gathered and combined in the writings of most of the composers of the time, the man seems to have been a true German. Not, however, one of those rough, vigorous sons of his country, with a strong mind in a sound body —working hard and hopefully, and taking Life as it comes, without being vexed with the "fever of vain longing,"—who make such excellent pillars to the fabric of Art ;—but crotchetty, fantastic ; as earnest in dreaming as in working. Born at Zerbst, in the year 1736, the son of an elder Fasch, who wrote oratorios, and an opera "Berenice" (like all other ancient German operas, long since forgotten), his zealous and enthusiastic spirit took so devout a direction in music, after hearing a sacred composition by Zelenka, at Dresden, that his father interdicted his frequenting the churches, lest he should become a Catholic. The current of such aspirations must have been strangely checked by his being appointed, in the year 1756, at the instance of Francis Benda, as accompanist to the flute *solos* and *concertos* of the philosophical

King of Prussia. Small encouragement for his religious dispositions was to be found in the sybaritic cabinets of Potsdam! Whether from having fallen into an ungenial soil, or whether benumbed by a settled engagement, bringing with it a competency—a condition which has proved as fatal to many a German ambition, as if hunger and thirst were the best incentives to Genius—it matters little. Many of the years of Fasch, however, were trifled away among shadows: some in imaginary experiments to improve the arts of warlike attack and defence; some in *building card-houses*, a passion analogous to that of Winter's for dressing up puppet-show Calvaries; some in arranging a table of colours, by which means a *farben clavier* (harpsichord of colours) should be constructed. At another period, he was in the habit of ascertaining, by arithmetical calculations, undertaken the first thing in the morning, whether he was fit to compose that day, or merely to untie those technical puzzles in which the Donnes and Quarleses of Music have always found a whimsical delight. We are told that he was subject to frequent fits of self-despondency; and would destroy his compositions as soon as they were finished. It seems as if his genius

hardly entered freely and fearlessly on its own proper path till he had reached a late period of life, when the fruits of a journey to Italy, and the composition of a sixteen-part mass, in emulation of Orazio Benevoli's famous composition, led him to the resolution of organizing an amateur society, which remained to be as unique as it was distinguished among musical establishments during a long period.

Certainly it is not saying too much, that the performance I heard at the *Sing-Academie*, in 1839, was worthy of its *habitat*. Concert-room and chorus seemed to me both in the first style of art. The former, by Herr Ottmer—a long, cheerful, resonant chamber, richly decorated, with its orchestra at one end, and its wide open space in the midst of the room—took the air of a private saloon, from the ease and good-nature with which its members chatted and talked: those indisposed to singing, lounging on the benches; those who were less indolent, joining the orchestra. There was no ceremony, no stiffness, no time lost in wrangling for parts: each one seemed to know his appointed place. The conductor, Herr Rungenhagen, struck a chord on a Collard pianoforte, and off started up-

wards of two hundred voices in one of Haydn's clear and jubilant motetts, with a sweetness, a certainty, and a refinement, I had then never heard elsewhere. I felt this all the more from having generally remarked that the quality of the stage voices I had heard in Germany was guttural and metallic. What amateurs lose in power, they perhaps gain, when well cultivated, in delicacy. It is hard, indeed, to believe that the diction of instructed persons, occupying themselves for their pleasure in works which, being analogous to the highest strains of poetry, give scope for conception as well as correctness, should not be superior to the delivery of a body which at best can feel but indistinctly—and at worst, is but impressed mechanically with the semblance of feeling. If my notion be reasonable, the critical spirit of Berlin, by making its amateurs fastidious as to *nuance*, may here have shown its bright side.

Mendelssohn's beautiful psalm, "As pants the Hart," was next admirably sung. Then came a complicated composition by Fasch, which, as I heard it, was charming, but which, if entrusted to a less sensitive body of choristers, must fail in its effect. It often happens that

in the world of Art, as in every other condition and passage of life, the balance seems to be kept even; and that overweening ascendancy is often provided against by the fact, that extreme perfection in the executive machine is apt to tempt the creator away from thoughts to details! The excellence of such a body of singers as the Berlin amateurs present, is certain to seduce one writing expressly for it, into such combinations as can be no where else executed. It was a double, perhaps even a quadruple chorus that I heard, supporting a high silvery voice throughout a florid *solo*, with orchestral richness and certainty. I was lost in wonder at the feat; but, on coming away, neither chord nor theme was in my ears. How different was this from my first introduction to the close of Handel's "Israel"—weakly played on the pianoforte, and sung by a handful of coarse and melancholy singers! Yet the leading phrase of *that* chorus niched itself in my ear, and will remain there till it loses its retentive faculty.

The *solo* was admirably sung by a *débutante*; and it was a pretty sight, when the concert broke up, to see every one crowding round her with words of praise and encouragement. All

seemed union and good understanding there: and by way of a last sanction to the young lady, as one inevitably destined for great things, Spontini approached her with his blandest smile, and a most dulcet "Voilà une véritable *Agnes von Hohenstauffen!*" The force of applause could no further go.

In the year 1839, the *Sing-Academie* consisted of about five hundred members, who met once a week,—a separate practice being held for the younger and less assured portion of its singers. Admission was made contingent on a certain amount of musical acquirement and vocal gift. It was necessary, too, that since their beautiful room had cost more money than the amateurs had to spend, they should give public performances from time to time to keep the debt down. On these occasions they called in orchestral aid.

As I strolled down the Linden that evening, listening to the merry talk of the groups as they parted for their homes, and my ears full of a choral harmony finer in quality than they had ever before received, all my cavillings against Berlin were forgotten; and, in the humour of the French widow who heard in the church

bells an encouraging "*Prends ton valet*," the clocks, as they chimed seven, seemed to say to me mockingly, "*You can't do that in England!*"

The clocks of 1853 would sing a different cuckoo-song, were one to listen to them as chroniclers:—they might now chime, "*We can do more in England*," to the pilgrim, supposing him to be bent on national self-assertion as earnestly as I was bent on national improvement, when they teased me as above. But the story to be told is not how popular musical taste at home has risen rapidly, spread widely, and chosen wisely during the last dozen years. More to the purpose of these pages is it to add, that, even in 1839, the *Sing-Academie* was spoken of by the amateurs of Berlin as being in a state of dowagership, if not decadence. The rumours of schisms, want of concord, supineness of direction, which in those days I disregarded, as belonging to the generally depreciating tone which pervaded all intercourse in the Prussian capital, have, I fear, since 1839 been confirmed; and the *Sing-*

Academie has fallen from its old high place among European musical establishments. It is needless to point out how, in a society rent to its centre and rotted to its core by the discomforts and discontents which bore such fatal and fruitless fruit in the year of Revolutions, the pleasant bonds of brotherhood which are indispensable to amateur co-operation, must of necessity be twisted awry and slackened. People wrangling about ideas rather than ascertaining what may be the consequences of their adoption, and planning popular movements ere they decide who is to be leader, are, naturally enough, careless about concords. Instead of escaping into the world of Art as into a place where spirits are refreshed, they are apt to take their grievances and disputes thither with them; and thus the unsocial social state of Prussia, doubtless, had its influences on the *Sing-Academie*, as upon all other peaceful institutions having no political tendency. But that its old age—not to say decay—was hastened largely by musical pedantry, cabal, exclusiveness, and favouritism, has been largely suggested by every notice that I have been able to take or to gather, concerning art and amateurship in Berlin, since

my visits of 1839-40. There are certain seeds which, however long they lie in the ground without being quickened, *will* come up sooner or later; and the narrow counsels which at one period of Art may be harmless, perhaps safe, perhaps even indispensable,—at another period are certain warrants and signals for its downfall and ruin.

CHAPTER V.

THE "HULDIGUNG" AT BERLIN.—1840.

The "Huldigung" at Berlin—Night journey—Agreeable company—Hôtel de Petersburg—Table-talk—Gluck's "Iphigenia in Tauris"—Mademoiselle von Fassmann—Disappointing performance—Exhibition of pictures—Illuminations.—*Postscript*—The operas of Gluck—Some attempt to characterize his genius.

I MADE another effort in the year 1840 to gratify one of my strongest musical wishes, with the earnest hope, too, of changing my first year's opinion of the Berlin opera, and of bringing my voice into concord with theirs who had described that theatre as affording the choicest music, executed in the most magnificent perfection.

I was at Leipsic on a drizzling, dreary Thursday afternoon, in October 1840, the very weather to make an invalid—many days' distant

from his own books and music, and stared at by the cold, glazed, sombre stove instead of being smiled on by his fire (that only companion with whom one is never at odds)—anticipate an evening of choice chamber-music, and the *carte blanche* "to do just as he liked," with particular *gusto*. "How unfortunate you are!" said Mendelssohn, who came in to pay me a friendly visit. "They have changed the opera at Berlin to-morrow night, and are going to give Gluck's 'Iphigenia in Tauris.' The letter has only just come. Eckert has taken a stall for you: you could have got there in time. What a pity you cannot go!"

This was in the week of the "Huldigung," when the nobles of Prussia had prepared for the new king in their metropolis those shows which the limited boundaries of Königsberg, where the monarch was crowned, rendered impossible. Every day's *schnellpost* had brought us its new promise of the splendours of the *fête*—such illuminations as had never been kindled before—and such a ball as no mortal sovereign had ever been bidden to, with concerts, *tableaux*, speeches, a supper—and *such* a production, by way of nationality, of Auber's pretty, but feeble, "Lac

des Fées" at the Grand Opera House. But a ball in autumn, in a strange town, was not one of the delights calculated "my mind to move" away from the quieter pleasures I was enjoying; and I had seen the opera in Paris, done in all perfection by Mademoiselle Nau, and MM. Duprez and Levasseur.*

There was no lying still, however, when I was within four-and-twenty hours of Berlin with one of Gluck's operas to be given. On the contrary, the name acted as tonic and cordial: and I had been told I *could* not go. Next to the invitation of a long-desired treat to a *fanatico*, there is no spur like his incapacity being taken for granted by kind counsellors. At six o'clock I was leaving Leipsic for a night's journey to Berlin.

What a night's journey that was! The North German system of conveyance, which

* This opera seems a favourite one in Germany on festival occasions. It was the one selected for performance in Stuttgart, by way of welcome to the young Crown Princess of Würtemburg, when she was brought home as a bride. Even with the advantage of an elegant *prologue*, written for the occasion by Herr Dingelstedt, it seemed a curious mistake to offer a *spectacle*-opera to one who, as the Grand Duchess Olga of Russia, had been habituated to a stage-gorgeousness only attainable when a Czar is paymaster at the theatre. 1853.

was bound to purvey for every traveller a seat in a carriage—in this indescribably convenient for one who *must* get forward—could not sweep the roads clear of mud, and did not undertake that the *bei chaisen*, to which we were obliged to have recourse, should be better vehicles than the one in which the redoubtable *Knockicroghery* drew *Lord Glenthorn* in Miss Edgeworth's inimitable "Ennui." The rain, which had for many days been coming down in torrents, that night "fell as if the world were drowned." Half of my fellow-travellers, some forty in number, were wet through before leaving the Leipsic post-house,—the process being pretty well completed at the first stage, where, on stepping out to change carriages, some of us plunged mid-leg deep into the inky streams with which the high road was covered. Ere we had proceeded for a couple of posts on our way, matters had become too desperate for complaint,—for all, at least, who had not the solace of tobacco—that German bosom-friend! The fumes of "the weed" mingled with the steams from the smoking upper-benjamins and cloaks of the males, and the strong odours of eatables from the provident *sacs* of the gentler

moiety of the caravan. It was a relief, after two hours of such a Black Hole, in a close six-inside vehicle, to be transferred to an open *britska;* though this was not so screened by rotten curtains of oil-cloth, which refused to draw, but that the icy, steely rain searched every corner of it out.—After all, such nights, even with rheumatic aches to boot, are worse when described than they are when endured. Mine, on the road to the "Huldigung," had its redeeming point, despite the showers and the tobacco-smoke, and a foot which felt like a weight of lead—only that lead is incapable of twinges. The intelligent and sprightly conversation of a lady casually encountered—one of those distinguished women whose age, whatever that be, is the only admirable age, and whose country is intellectual Europe—was worth much inconvenience and a little pain, and has survived in my recollection the bodily suffering, the bitter air, and the blighting rain.

Most disastrous was the work wrought by the latter element on the road. At Delitsch and Bitterfeld, and all the other little towns on the Prussian side of the frontier, the national fancy for garlands had displayed itself, and

attempts to do honour to the festival by illumination had been made. Only one lamp in three was sputtering out a faint and feeble flame; and when the night-wind rustled the leaves of the evergreen wreaths, a deluge was discharged on the heads of those entering or issuing from the doors thus graced. The early dawn showed a wretchedly chill and dripping scene; and though, as the day grew older, the sun came out, and the clouds were tossed hither and thither in vast and parti-coloured masses, so as to exhibit a ground of blue sky, the weather remained, to the very gates of Berlin, wild and ungenial—the very worst pageant-weather imaginable. And the holiday dress of the stately city gave a bleak and desolate air of mockery to the draggled crowds under umbrellas that caught the eye whichever way it went.

After driving about for an hour, and, for the one only time in my German experiences, being encountered by extortion in its grossest forms, in despair I found quarters where I should least have expected to find them, in the Hôtel de Petersburg, under the Linden. Service and ministry of every comfort (and truly I required

both) were there afforded me as promptly as if I had been one of the *Grafs*, or Princes, or Countesses, whose plumed *chasseurs*, striding about in every direction among their plumed lords and ladies, gave the court-yard an appearance which whimsically reminded me of Lance's capital picture of the tormented jackdaw among the peacocks. If every preparation had not been spoilt by the rain, the show must have been magnificent. I never saw so many fine-looking men in the same narrow space, or so many gorgeous uniforms; and the ladies were some of them well worth looking at, and received the compliment as a matter of course. These gay apparitions, taken in conjunction with food, rest, and warmth, restored me to a belief that a festivity at Berlin must be a very brilliant thing, and that the performance of Gluck's opera could hardly fail to be worth the journey, and the fascinating chamber-music I had left behind me.

Of the earlier ceremonies I heard nothing to make me regret having missed them. The King had been kept in the cathedral by a clergyman who had never heard the aphorism, "that no gentleman can keep his congregation enter-

tained longer than twenty minutes;" and, on issuing thence, and taking his place on the throne erected in front of the Palace to receive the homages of his people, he had been reminded of his mortality most cruelly. A sudden burst of the malicious element had drenched the fine clothes of the courtiers, laid flat their feathers, and, streaming down the monarch's face, had given it, according to the loyal *Master Lane-hams* of the Berlin press, only an additional serenity and intellectual glory! "Well," I said, hugging myself with a stupid security, as all these melancholy details were laid before me, "the rain cannot at least have washed away the violoncellos and flutes of the orchestra. Perhaps I was unjust to Mademoiselle von Fassmann last year. I am going to hear Gluck in all his glory!"

A promise not easy to be kept, as regards that Milton of Music; for—orchestral intricacy and its exigencies laid aside—the art has perhaps no works demanding a higher union of all the powers which captivate, and all that impress, than the grand lyrical dramas of the composer of "Iphigenia in Tauris." I know that the master-pieces loved and learned late in one's career are

apt to be unduly prized—that, till the time when fond Memory takes the place of judgment, and declares nothing to be so delicious or perfect as the music that charmed us twenty years ago, Imagination and Conceit combine to heighten the *gusto* with which works, traditionally considered crabbed, severe, and above common sympathy, are enjoyed. It is a compliment to our own far-sightedness to believe, that *we* have the thorough key to their mysteries; and I feel jealous lest, on egotistic and selfish grounds, I may value Gluck's opera-music too highly, because it is one of the last musical acquisitions I have made, and because the making of it cost me some trouble—not forgetting that night of rain in *bei chaisen!*

Yet my anticipations had, at the very outset, to abate much of their first excitement. I was met in Berlin with the blanking information, that the opera was to be given in the *Schauspielhaus*, with an orchestra and chorus smaller than those of the Grand Opera. The latter had been bespoken for the ball. Still I took my seat in the *balcon* of the smaller theatre, though blanked, not hopeless. The work, performed by official command, and during the coronation

festivities of a monarch who had already given indications of strong and large musical sympathies, could surely (I thought) not fail to be well given.

Alas! let no one count upon Royalty being stronger than Luck! The overture to "Iphigenia in Aulis," not remarkably well played, passed over;—and after it the symphony of the storm, in the midst of which the Priestess enters, upon as fine a vocal burst as was ever planned by composer for the introduction of his *prima donna*. But my ear waited and waited in vain. A sound, at once harsh, tough, and feeble, ill represented that splendid invocation of awe and terror; and, but for seeing the distinctive *bandeau* and wreath, and mystery of many veils (traditionally, as the reader knows, copied from Milder), I should never have separated the heroine of the piece from the host of screaming satellites who crowded round her, by any predominance of tone, manner, or gesture. It was the very same Mademoiselle von Fassmann that I had journalized, and none other!—a year worse in voice than she had been in 1839, and not a day better in method than when she dragged Weber's exquisite *cantabiles* out of shape.

The opera was produced with care in stage arrangements, and liberality as to numbers and costume.* The Scythians danced their ferocious measures in costumes well nigh as savage as those of the *tape-durs*† who lorded it in the pits of the French theatres during the days of terror. The Furies, who, by a permissible

* The probability, as well as liberality, of the German stage arrangements struck me forcibly whenever I entered a theatre. One of the most real presentments I ever saw was the scene at Berlin, without the cathedral, in the fourth act of Schiller's "Joan of Arc," where the booming of the bells, and the measured thunder of artillery, and the flourishes of wind-music, wafted past on the air, and then trodden out by the sound of many feet, were given with a reality which imposed upon the senses by its force—enhancing the effect of that splendid scene. Modern drama, save perhaps the tremendous interview between *Thekla* and the soldier in "Wallenstein's Death," has nothing more moving than the meeting of *Joan of Arc* and her sisters, with her dogged, credulous father, who curses her for a wicked sorceress. The acting of the play, as I saw it, was very bad; the Maid of Orleans being personated by a middle-aged woman, little more sylphid in figure than our own Mrs. Glover: but the scene alluded to, as a scene, excited and affected me deeply.

† "The *Tape-durs*," says the English editor of M. Fleury's translated "Memoirs of the French Stage," "amused themselves by making a noise in the theatre; singing, or rather roaring, their patriotic songs to the annoyance of all who were less boisterously inclined than themselves. They had not acquired their title of *Tape-dur* quite so early as the 10th of August, but they had long laboured to deserve it. These janisaries of the Revolu-

license, are preternaturally multiplied in the scene of the vision of *Orestes*, were sufficiently frightful and ghastly. Nevertheless, in the splenetic mood engendered by vexation and want of sleep, I had fault to find with them also. They were too tangible, too prominent: instead of being hid among enveloping shadows, with a head or an arm at intervals more distinctly evident—an effect entirely attainable, as many a French *ballet* will testify—they stood as nakedly out as though they had been so many men and women, applying their snakes to the tormented dreamer, as a chorus of hospital-surgeons might have done. I would have forgiven them this, however, had they only satisfied the ear, and sung in tune; but even this simple excellence was withheld. The chorus was, throughout, false and coarse: perhaps, on the principle of the white-linen madness of *Tilburina's* confidante, to follow the example set by their sovereign priestess.

tion wore a peculiar livery: it consisted of wide pantaloons and short waistcoats, with a strange kind of cap, covered with fox-skin, and falling down over the broad shoulders of the wearer; who, moreover, carried about with him, as an auxiliary to this elegant costume, a large knotted stick, which was styled *a constitution*."

With her I could only have been satisfied could I have been contented with posture-making, in place of personation. It is true that the graceful and statuesque foldings of her veil changed with every moment to a new and more effective arrangement, but this was done so obviously and anxiously as to convince me that there lay *Iphigenia's* heart and treasure : and I could not, for the sake of such drapery-work, forgive defective musical intonation, and the want of that impulse and geniality which (no matter how it be manifested) *must* contribute its share to every performance as distinguished from an exercise. Those might be Milder's robings, but Milder's Greek fire was absent; and the audience ended as it began the evening—cold and respectful, but unsympathizing. It was with an effort that I could remain to see "the charm wound up."

It will serve no good purpose to dwell on the rest of the performance—on the antiquity of Herr Bader's voice, and the unsuitability of his figure for the part of *Orestes*. Herr Mantius, as *Pylades*, delighted me by contrast; and the sweetness of his voice struck me so welcomely as to add another to the long list of assurances

that my first year's impressions of the Berlin Opera were neither sarcastic nor uncharitable. As I crept home to bed, more weary in mind than in body, I made a covenant with myself never again to leave a certain pleasure for an uncertain opera eighteen hours off—even though the name of Gluck, and the reputation of a metropolis at high festival-tide, conspire to beckon me.

Betimes in the next morning I went across to the Exhibition to spend an hour, before visits could be admissible, among the modern painters of Berlin. The show was confessedly meagre and inferior—indebted to French artists for some of its cardinal attractions. But one picture, of sweet and delicate fancy, so haunted me as to stand out like a bright spot in the not very bright recollections of the public sights of those two days. It was a very small work by Steinbrück; which, perhaps, I relished all the more from having admired the original sketch a day or two before in ——'s album. The subject was a little girl among elves. The vagrant child has sailed away in a boat, not caring whither, and the waters have floated her into one of those deep woodland recesses where the

stream, overhung with trees, is yet more intimately canopied by the large fan-like leaves of water-plants, so thickly interlacing each other as wholly to prohibit day from coming through, save in a green, tempered light—the very atmosphere of Elf-land! Thus entrapped, the maiden is surrounded by the small creatures of the place. One has leaped into the prow of her shallop — another holds up a rosy shell full of nectar-dew—while a band of yet more graceful creatures, linked hand-in-hand, do their part in arresting her progress, offering her garlands, and gifts, and courtesies. Never was encouragement for truancy so exquisitely painted! The child of Earth is, however, not wholly at ease with her playmates: she stands upright in the midst of the band, half fearful, half pleased. Her sober eye contradicts her saucy lip; and she looks round her with a demure and suspicious glance, as if she knew she was only half worthy of, or only half believed in, the earnest and pretty welcome arranged for her greeting. The picture worthily illustrated one of Tieck's exquisite legends;—and, like the mermaid-music in Weber's "Oberon," or the leading phrase in Mendelssohn's delicious

overture to " Melusine," haunts me to this day with the remembrance of its airy grace and fantastic sweetness.

If I gave the Germans credit for pre-eminence in the fantastic vein in the morning, the illuminations of the evening, incomplete as they were—a *réchauffé* of preparations spoiled by the rain of the preceding night,—riveted me in the conviction that in some things they outdo us in the picturesque. The pair of domes belonging to the churches in the *Gens d'Armes Platz*, which, with the *Schauspiel-haus*, make such an effective architectural group from whatever side contemplated, were surrounded with rings of blue and crimson and yellow light—less brilliant than the gas illuminations which, with us, produce such strong contrasts when relieved against the intense sky of night, but of a more harmonious variety and sweetness. The bronzes, again, on the cornice of the Museum were, by some unseen contrivance, so felicitously presented, that the figures seemed balanced in air upon a field of light. I paused long to admire them. It was tantalizing to be compelled to take up my staff and return, just when the elements had begun

to show more clemency, and when every kind voice was inviting me to remain for the magnificent *fête*, the preparations for which in the Opera House* had so cruelly traversed my desire to see a work of Gluck's worthily represented.—But the temptation was not to be yielded to; and I set forth to return to Leipsic, through another night of *bei-chaisen* and tobacco-smoke, gratified to have a pleasant parting impression of a city which I fear I may be thought to have visited in not precisely that amiable and placable frame of mind which should distinguish the *fanatico*,—or his love for "the concord of sweet sounds" means nought, if Shakespeare was a true poet.

* This festivity furnished another proof of that closer love of the picturesque on the part of the Germans than we possess, and their more constant desire to give Art its due place in all pageants and public celebrations, to which allusion has been already made. One of the principal features at the ball was a series of *tableaux vivans*, arranged by the most eminent painters of Berlin, representing scenes and groups from the history of Brandenburg, beginning with the days of Frederic I., Burggrave of Nuremburg (1417), and coming down to one of Frederic the Great's Potsdam concerts, with a flute solo, performed as in order due; and Mara's nightingale air, "Mi paventi," executed by Mademoiselle Löwe. This representation had been preluded by the performance of Gluck's overture to "Armida," and a prologue spoken by Madame Crelinger.

Postscript.—Such was a performance in the capital of Prussia, on a state occasion, of one of the most royal works, put forth by one of the greatest kings of Music—poor enough, it will be owned, to disappoint any one that took with him to Germany a wholesale and preconceived conviction of universal reverence and sedulousness in performance, if not of infallible wisdom in selection.—Since 1840, however, I have heard certain of Gluck's operas given at Berlin on a grander scale. The impression produced by the performances in question, has been such as to make it a duty, after publishing a chapter like the above, to do compensating honour to the theatre which has persisted, and which still persists, in keeping alive the recollection and the tradition of musical drama in its highest, purest, and most living form.

This is all the more incumbent since the operas of Gluck can only be studied as they deserve by being heard and seen; and, moreover, under conditions of careful and magnificent presentation. The most experienced and imaginative of readers will derive from the closest perusal of the scores of Gluck's operas, feeble and distant impressions of their power

and beauty. The delicious charm of Mozart's melody—the expressive nobility of Handel's ideas—may, in some measure, be comprehended by the student at the pianoforte; and the eye may assure the reader how masterly is the symmetry of the vocal score with one,—how rich and complete is the management of the instrumental score, with the other master. But this is in no respect the case with "Alceste," the two "Iphigenies," and "Armide"—it may be added, with almost any opera written according to the canons of French taste. That which appears thin, bald, severe, when it is merely perused, is filled up, brightens, enchants, excites, and satisfies, when it is heard with action,—to a degree only to be believed upon experience. Out of the theatre, three-fourths of Gluck's individual merit is lost. He wrote for the stage; and when he has been judged in the closet, he has been either half judged, or else curiously misunderstood. His very excellence, his force, his grandeur, his completeness in accomplishing the end proposed, may be said to have stood betwixt him and his lawful fame. It becomes a nice point to decide which is the greater—that work of Art, which is supreme in

the place and for the purpose to which it was destined, but which when turned to other uses, is fragmentary, poor in suggestion, and barren of pleasure,—or that work of Art, less incontestibly faultless in its special position, which shall yield beauty in a thousand forms and a thousand places, when it is divided, considered in detail, adapted, transcribed. The former will be open to exception as stronger in effect than in idea; but then the latter must bear the reproach of possessing ideas out of proportion with the effect produced.

These are among the nicest points of criticism—only, perhaps, to be touched when the mood is critical, when we are willing to examine our pleasures, and to be lectured concerning their real import and nature. Yet the touching of them from time to time, has its use; whatever be thought of the unauthorized or irreverent hand that attempts to adjust the scales, and may be blamed for meddling with reputations.—I am the more willing to hazard reproof in this matter, from an intense and earnest conviction that, in England, Gluck has never enjoyed due renown, as the greatest of great opera composers. Our passion for

Mozart, largely justified by the wide field of that delicious poet's triumphs, has led us to injustice, not only as regards Handel, Rossini, and Beethoven, who have all been exposed to some disparaging comment in England, because they were not Mozart—but signally so as regards Mozart's superior in the highest forms of musical drama. He has been admitted to be grand, impassioned, awful, intelligent, and pertinent in the adaptation of sound to sense—but he has not received due credit for beauty, grace, skill, and variety. There must, and I hope sincerely there will, come a time of greater clear-sightedness in this matter.

Such advent—it is possible to think, and instructive to remark—may have been retarded by the very means adopted by Gluck to set himself in a clear light before the world. In how few cases have the poets been able to criticize themselves without harming themselves, and arming their antagonists! With something of the feeling of a persecuted man—with some of the covert bitterness engendered by the expectation of long-denied fame—the composer of "Alceste" could not give out that opera without alluding, almost in caricature, to the abuses which Fashion,

and the caprices of Italian singers, had introduced into opera; and without setting forth, with a somewhat exaggerated severity, his own uncompromising proceedings, whereby (to speak fantastically) the *Samson* common-sense was to be delivered from the *Dalilah* "sing-song." Thus, as it were, Gluck pinioned himself to the mission of subduing by might, right, and authority—voluntarily casting aside all pretext of charming, delighting, persuading the ear; and thus certain catch-words have got mixed up in the chorus of praise that established his reputation, which, like other serviceable fragments of the wisdom or folly of our ancestors, exercise a traditional influence over us even unto this day.

But in the case of Gluck, we are called upon to mark those important concessions, not to say inconsistencies, into which every artist must be tempted or compelled, let his system be ever so stringent, ever so nicely arranged, when it is an afterthought brought forward as a piece of special pleading, to recommend or to defend his own idiosyncrasy. He was not prevented by his fixed principles from borrowing musical themes from one opera to enrich another

withal, thus throwing discredit on his theory, which he announced was based on the precise and appreciable significance of certain sounds. He was not able to protect himself in the grandest of his grand operas, from introducing the conventionalisms of easy and popular melodies, though these were given to the *ballet*, and not to the dramatic part of the work : forgetting that the *ballet*, as it existed in Gluck's time, was a convention and an excrescence, as much (one might have thought) to be avoided by him as a *da capo* or a trill for the *prima donna*.

The reputation of Gluck, again, has become a tradition rather than a reality, because of the rare execution of his operas; though the execution has been rendered rare by no fault save their own exceeding height and grandeur. And who misjudges "Macbeth" because the present generation have not seen Mrs. Siddons—the last *Lady*? Who depreciates "Lear," because the principal part in that tragedy is almost above the grasp of the most consummate mortal actor conceivable? The heroes and heroines of Gluck's operas are not intellectually placed on heights quite so inaccessible: but, musically, the works are more

difficult of approach. The finest, purest, plainest singing in the grand style, together with the loftiest and most impassioned tragic acting, are not to be found in every-day combination. The screaming ladies, and bellowing gentlemen (I doubt not, graceful and dignified actors), who satisfied French ears, at the period when the master wrote, could now be hardly tolerated, I suspect—even in Germany, where the appreciation of vocal art has been so slow, so uncertain, and, of late, has shown itself so ready to decline in favour of other preferences. The world requires beauty and variety of tone, as well as power of lungs—some elasticity in the voice, as well as some precision in delivering the words—a company, in short, of great dramatic vocalists of genius—to draw from this music of Gluck its whole meaning. Where or when has such a phenomenon been seen? Once in fifty years Nature and Art produce a Pasta; fifteen years later, comes a Duprez; and when he is ready to retire, a Lind and a Viardot present themselves at opposite ends of the scale, and at opposite corners of the operatic world. Yet the best of the best, grouped together, and directed by some consummate

master spirit, fully imbued with the music and the drama to be performed, would not be too good, collectively, to render adequate justice to these master-pieces of dramatic poetry in music.

But, leaving such Utopian visions of what a represented opera by Gluck should be, there is enough in his music, when reverently sung and played by the inferior singers and coarse operatic actors of modern Germany, to surprise by its beauty, as well as to arrest by its power. What a voluptuous lusciousness of melody floats and dies through the fairy scenes of "Armida!" There is no instance of fascination in music more exquisite than the great tenor song of *Rinaldo** "Plus j'observe ces lieux;" no melody more alluring in its mellow monotony than *Lucinda's solo* (in the same opera), "Jamais, dans ces

* The hunters of plagiarisms are fond of this magnificent *scena*, because they can prove that Gluck improved an idea indicated by Lulli. The scientific pedants rejoice no less cordially in its existence, because of the consecutive fifths, which it delights their hearts to be able to point out. But the former do not recollect how Mozart was indebted to Gluck's "Alceste" for his supernatural music in "Don Juan;" and the latter must stop short at Haydn among the German composers, if they will not allow instances of crudity, licence, and obscurity, to pass without an anathema.

beaux lieux." Then how delicately fantastic is the bird chorus, "C'est l'amour qui retient dans ses chaines" — as noble the while, in its style, as Handel's "Cheer her, O Baal," in "Athaliah," or, "May no rash intruder," in "Solomon." In "Alceste," the beauty is more irresistible than the intense tragic tenderness of the music. I have never been more moved by delicious sensations and deep emotions conjointly, so strongly as by a very moderate performance of this opera at Berlin. Every amateur knows the sublime pantomimic music in the temple scene; but when it is aided by stage representation, its dignity acquires a tenderness which becomes almost oppressively powerful. Never was air simpler—never was harmony less recondite; but the pulses stop as the religious march goes on, in eagerness that the listener may lose no single note, pause, or chord, in a strain of such rare inspiration. Then, how delicious is the air of *Admetus*, immediately after the chorus with *ballet* in the second act, with its caressing burden: an every-day passage now, but when it was originated, how honeyed, how fresh, how tender, how new! Music has few examples of sweetness without sickliness more perfect than this.

Or, changing the drama, shall we turn to the *cantilena* of *Orpheus* addressed to the *Furies?* There, if beauty and seduction had not been in the musician's power, the scene must have failed, and that fatally, owing to the incompleteness of the spell. But who has ever felt for an instant that the composer was unequal to the scene—or that Music, in its most suave, and winning, and subduing forms, was not there represented and justified as stronger than the most strongly pourtrayed rage and resolve on the part of the demons, fiercely determined to maintain their grasp on *Eurydice*, in proportion as they know their prey to be fair and precious. Those who talk of Gluck's grandeur, should recollect that this is possibly the strongest example of the might of beauty vindicated existing in art. There is no painted apotheosis of painting; no sculptural illustration of the power of sculpture; no poetical hymn to poetry even (I will dare to assert), so symmetrically complete, so potentially captivating as this. —One more example of Gluck's beauty may be cited: in the heroine's grand *aria* in his " Iphigenia in Tauride," " O malheureuse Iphigenie!" the lament of a mighty princess, daughter of a great king, sister of a

hero, with whom the Fates and the Gods have not disdained to strive, was removed (it might have been thought) by its argument, and the height of her who delivered it, above the sphere of superficial attraction. But Gluck knew better than to sacrifice so cardinal, so *vital* an element of his poetry and its power as beauty, at such an important moment: accordingly this air, the loftiest perhaps of all his single songs, is perhaps, among them all, the most symmetrically lovely, whether as regards its *cantilena*, its accompaniment, or the unisonal introduction of the chorus at its close.

In none of the cited instances is there the slightest attempt—born of weakness, and bred by conceit—to force art beyond its own special bounds. None of these specimens is antipathetic to the voice, or repulsive to the singer; or conciliatory of those strange souls who hold that sincerity and brutality, might and ugliness, are one. The forms of the Etruscan vase—"the line," as painters put it, of the *Apollo*, *Venus*, *Niobe*—the proportions of the portico of the Parthenon—are not more essentially, palpably, intelligently graceful, complete, and harmonious, than are

these examples in music. Yet those who would praise, and who endeavour while praising also to prove, the beauty of Gluck, are as yet without a public.

In like manner I have never heard one of Gluck's operas, without being surprised by a merit in them, for which the annalists (before the time of M. Berlioz, at least) have never given him credit,—namely, orchestral variety, interest, and invention. Though Mozart's scores be more satisfying to the eye, there is in Gluck's instrumentation something that arrests the ear beyond anything existing in the "Idomeneo," or the "Clemenza,"—a force, brightness, and originality, which are as new as they are delicious. I know not why it should be so, but certain it is that his fancies, as fancies, come out into brighter relief than any thing in Mozart's operas—*Tamino's* flute, *Papageno's* bells, and the *tromboni* that speak together with *Il Commendatore*, perhaps, excepted. Let me cite as a few among many instances, the dialogue betwixt the two wind instruments to the words—

> "J' entends retentir dans mon sein,
> Le cri plaintif de la nature,"

in "Iphigenie en Aulide;"—the ferocious life

given to the chorus of Scythians in " Iphigenie en Tauride," by the use of the cymbal;—the lute-like *pizzicato* of the violins in the chorus with *ballet* in the second act of " Alceste," and then the entire change of instruments on the *amoroso* in G minor, which serves as *trio* (so to say) to this composition.—In the final *trio*, again, of the same opera, as well as the sunny, simple expression of the fullest, most rapturous happiness which that movement displays—do I remember an effect made by a prolonged shake on the flutes—as charming as some breath of flower-scents in spring which is so fresh and welcome, that we cannot but choose to remember it, though it have passed us at one of those moments when we are most absorbed by some powerful emotion. Perhaps these happy traits and touches tell all the more, from the comparative simplicity of the tissue into which they are interwoven—and supposing this proved to be the case, we may arrive at some canons of dramatic orchestral effect, not easy to reconcile with the practice of those writers who have treated Opera symphonically. Perhaps, however, their entire significance arises from the perfect balance of mind which seems to have distin-

guished Gluck, and which apparently enabled him thoroughly to accomplish, with the noblest use of legitimate means, every purpose that he set before him.

The task in hand is not a monograph on the genius of Gluck, so much as the presentation of a few thoughts on certain points in his genius which may have been too generally overlooked. Thus, it is not needful to dwell upon his supremacy among operatic writers, in the declamatory portions of his works. His recitative stands alone: approached by Mozart only, in some few passages—such, for instance, as *Donna Anna's* burst in "Don Juan," when she recognises her father's murderer; emulated by Rossini, in his third act of "Otello;" but by himself always maintained at the highest point of interest, without ever becoming overwrought or oppressive. By this very characteristic, those who have searched the depths of musical invention, would have been led to admit the claims of Gluck as a melodist:—seeing that no good recitative will be ever written by those who are ignorant of the balance of cadence —of the sweetness or sadness of certain intervals —of contrast betwixt phrase and phrase—of mea-

sured time, least licentious when freest—of all, in short, that goes to make one of the tunes in which the world is to delight.

The harsh, sensible prose of a Swift is not further from the blank verse of a Milton, than much of the recitative written by the so-called intellectual school of anti-melodists, is distant from the soliloquies or dialogues of Gluck. They are in music, what the monologues of *Hamlet*, the discourse of *Romeo* and *Juliet* at the balcony, the oration of *Antony* over *Cæsar's* body, are in poetry:—the freest, most natural, most exciting utterances of emotion in Art that can be found or framed; so true, that they seem to have formed part of our own daily life and experience; yet *how* high as creations when they are measured against the best which the best of men less distinguished have produced! The thought, the experience, the suffering, that must have gone to make these scenes, to choose these notes, do not come home to the young student in music. He likes something more of parade—something more of the appearance of difficulty overcome—and fancies these connecting links unimportant and easy to fashion.—(I am not speaking here of the newest writers of Germany,

who would reduce Opera to a composition of these links only; since they "came in" after the Revolution of 1848.)—He is caught by imitations and strange chords. He is devout in praise of "the flat ninth." As he advances, however, the more catholic he becomes towards the modern school of those who can only produce effect by accumulation, the more seriously will he be impressed by writers of an elder dispensation, who awe, impress, and enchant us by the simplicity of their eternal greatness—the more intimately will he relish the choral force of Handel, and the intense dramatic vigour of Gluck.

A singular fate has attended Gluck's five great operas. Popular they can hardly have ever been said to be, save during the time when all Paris was raging one way or the other—as Paris loved and loves to rage—on their account; but neither can they be said to have been ever wholly off the stage. There have been fits of classicism, and fits of romanticism, and fits of fate-dramas, and fits of Shakspeare mania, and of Molière mania, and fits (pretty long and intoxicating ones) of preference for Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti—nay, for such "small deer"

as Adam, Balfe, and Flotow; but almost every German opera-house of any note has been obliged to keep one of Gluck's operas in its repertory—his "Orpheus" being the most seldom selected—so that certain traditions connected with their performance have never wholly died out, nor passed into the neglect of the stage lumber-room. They will bear any conceivable amount of stage splendour in their preparation. They *demand* extraordinary respect; no operas existing, of which a slack or slighting performance would be so intolerable. From first to last, every creature concerned in their execution must be *en scene:* not merely thoroughly aware of his special duties, but penetrated by the tone of the story. Here, I suspect, even more than in the sublimity of their principal parts, lies the stumbling-block in the way of managers. They have no trio of masks, no "Market Chorus," no "Di tanti," no "Benediction des poignards,"—for the sake of which well executed, the public will overlook a tame or slovenly handling of less salient portions of the opera. At Berlin, it is the general propriety of representation in which the lover of Gluck must find his pleasure, and not,

I fear, in the singing of his *Iphigenias* and *Pylades*.—At Berlin, too, there seems a tradition to be proud of performing these operas; and the public accordingly, when one is performed, appears in solemn array, with the well-pleased air of persons who go to church, for the sake of the institution and the example. Thus these noble works may possibly be kept alive—kept within the reach of dramatic singers of the highest class, who may be large, deep, and skilful enough to recognise what scope the music gives, and to what heights its interpreters may be raised. Meanwhile, the exhibition of them forms a feature in the music of Berlin, which atones for the want of many another feature, and which merits special gratitude from all who admire the works of the greatest masters in Art.

CHAPTER VI.

THE THEATRE AT BERLIN FROM 1840 TO 1848.

Patronage of music under the present King of Prussia—Commission to Herr Meyerbeer—"The Camp of Silesia"—The Music to "Struensee," by the same composer—The commissions to Mendelssohn — The old absolutism of royal patronage revived.

To examine what the present King of Prussia, whose reign was inaugurated in 1840, has substantially effected for music in Germany, is a subject for some future historian of German Art, rather than for a work for this.—Nevertheless, it is impossible to avoid observing that, during the first eight years of his sovereignty, his Majesty approved himself as the successor of the great Frederick, not merely by his earnest protection and patronage of music, but also by the forms into which his interest moulded itself, and sought

to mould the spirits of those whom he gathered to his capital.

During the years which elapsed betwixt the "Huldigung" and the Revolution of 1848, strenuous attempts were made by the King of Prussia to raise Music in connection with Art and letters, to a high place in his metropolis. Whether greater union, greater placability, greater scope for German theatrical composers, a better construction put by musician upon musician, have distinguished the artistic circles of Berlin since the Chevalier Spontini, a stranger, was succeeded by Herr Meyerbeer, a native of the town, is a delicate matter for future, not for contemporary investigation. The one new opera originated at Berlin, within the eight years in question, that has excited the slightest sensation, is Herr Meyerbeer's "Camp of Silesia;" and this rather because of the renown of its composer, and because certain pieces were introduced into it for the exhibition of Mademoiselle Jenny Lind's amazing vocal powers, than for any permanent value in music or story, entitling the work to rank with "Les Huguenots" and "Le Prophete."

The "Camp," as it is well known, was written

as a *piece d'occasion:* and those employed in its concoction seemed unable to fancy anything less direct and prosaic, by way of subject, than Frederick the Great with his flute, and one of those monstrous military gatherings, the nature (if not the uniform) of which is as familiar to every Prussian boy and girl as the opening of their eyes in the morning. The poorness and platitude of Herr Rellstab's *libretto*, and the want of any of those moments of intense emotion in which M. Meyerbeer delights, seem to have damped the composer. Slight and pretty he is, at best, but has made nothing that will last. There are plenty of tunes in the opera—camp tunes, gipsy tunes—but these are smart rather than new, and when measured against like *motivi* in a work by no means classical, Donizetti's "La Fille du Régiment," they sound poor and common. The *terzetto* for *Vielka* and two flutes, one on the stage, and one behind the scenes, is better as a concert-piece than when heard in the opera; because there, the songstress must remain at such a distance from both instruments (the flutist on the stage, like *Tamino*, in "Zauberflöte," being merely a mime), that all the intimacy of response and dialogue is

lost, and the effect is that of a *soprano* scrambling against a double echo.—There is, however, another *terzetto* (also in the third act) which is charming—full of phrases as happy as some of those which give solidity and savour to the otherwise frivolous *trio bouffe* in "Le Prophète"—flowing, rich, and melodious;—and the final national hymn, which was prophesied in the overture, is an animated, enthusiastic air, of most inspiriting quality. But the effect of the whole work is that of meagreness of idea, and extravagant, unmusical pomp of *spectacle*, forced into an odd union;—and in all cases where the stage will not admit of the marshalling of several regiments, or where the heroine has not the peculiar voice and the peculiar ways with her that Mademoiselle Jenny Lind had, or where there is no Prussian public half sentimentally, half cynically "to sit upon" the flute-playing of their great King—the glory, I think, of "The Camp" would dwindle into nothingness;—so that Herr Meyerbeer may be wise in following M. Spontini's example with respect to his opera written for Berlin, and in showing no alacrity to provide it with a passport.

But, though the one new German opera pro-

duced at the Berlin Opera House, betwixt the days of the "Huldigung" and the time present, can hardly expect or pretend to count as addition to the repertory of the German theatre; something interesting has still been produced in the Prussian capital. This has taken the form of mixed theatrical entertainment. At the King of Prussia's instance, Herr Meyerbeer produced music to his brother's tragedy of "Struensee." A greater Prussian composer, too, also summoned to his native town by the present King, wrote for Berlin his music to "Antigone," "Œdipus,"—to the "Athalie" of Racine, and to the "Midsummer Night's Dream" of Shakspeare.

Mendelssohn was not wholly a stranger to the stage of the Prussian capital. To the production there and withdrawal thence of one of his early operas, "Camacho's Wedding," he never referred willingly. Both the work and its composer were, probably, heartlessly treated in his own town. But though posterity may, some day, fall back on the opera with that toleration bred among its writer's later successes, which will invest every line from his pen with a certain charm, —no one can pretend that the opera *per se*, deserved to please or to live. It is among the few published

compositions by its writer to which the epithet "crude" may be applied. The pedantry in it oppresses the fancy. There is a taste of Berlin pretension in the music, which may be the reason why the prophet did not find honour at home.

Be it good or bad, however, the fate of "Camacho's Wedding" contributed to keep Mendelssohn aloof from the stage. By the four theatrical works which he produced (as has been just said) "on command," as much as by the fragment of "Loreley," which was his swan song, we may divine the extent of our loss in his silence.—Who will not regret that in place of the court commissions in question, Mendelssohn's royal patron did not order a simple, honest, entire opera? The circumstance of his having to write for the delectation of princes, courtiers, professors, and men of letters, in no respect exempted the composer from the annoyances and postponements which seem inevitably to belong to the production of theatrical music. He had to fight with pedantic fopperies, or inane criticisms, in the production of his music to Shakspeare's fairy play; and with caprices no less teasing in the delayed execution of his "Athalie" music. "Antigone" seemed

to come out under a brighter star; and he always referred to its first performance as to one of the good days of which his life (God be thanked!) had so many. But under the best of circumstances, these works are, by their nature, rarely accessible, appealing only to a peculiar and limited public,—liable, when produced, to misconstruction and failure of effect, in no respect ascribable to their musical qualities; and thus they can hardly be esteemed as important gifts to the musical stage of Germany.

It may be feared that the present monarch of Prussia, so far as concerns music, is merely a king of the old absolute pattern,—indulging his own æsthetic vagaries, though with a smoother, more modern, more *protesting* theory of patriotism than kings of the elder time troubled themselves to entertain or to express. The most elaborate deliberations of all the professors of all the universities assembled in conclave will never really reproduce the theatre and the music of the Greeks. Who would call up the ghost of any great poet, were the condition that he must be heard speaking modern language? Yet, on the other side, who would bear the work of art, seen under all the rude cir-

cumstances and absurd accidents of its original production? Great was the stir made among the Shakspearians of Berlin, with Tieck at their head, to have "The Midsummer Night's Dream" played exactly as it was in the time of Shakspeare. Alas! for the connoisseurship of Germany. The impossibility of this forced itself on the most devout — point by point. They were compelled to submit to the introduction of scenery painted by Herr Gropius and others, in place of the antique arrangement of curtains and signboards. It was true that the Athenian lovers might still be presented (according to the old tradition) "in Spanish habits"— and this classicality was actually proposed, and the proposal had to be energetically combated by Mendelssohn. Whether it was ultimately carried out or not, is of small consequence to the argument.

It is difficult to think of such parleys and ransackings—of such lame efforts—of such provisional expedients, barren in origin, and null in result, with patience—when we reflect what the same patronage genially bestowed, might have effected. Some royal wish of seeing a German story set by a German composer, might have

persuaded Mendelssohn to abridge the time of hesitation which he had allowed to elapse before he attempted opera-composition as a man, and might have recorded the present King of Prussia's reign in the history of Art, by some great, enduring, and universal work, which should have been to the theatre what "Elijah" is to the sacred concert room.

GLIMPSES AT DRESDEN

IN 1839-40,

WITH MATTER CONCERNING A LATER PERIOD.

GLIMPSES AT DRESDEN

IN 1839-40.

CHAPTER I.

THE OPERA AND ITS ENVIRONS—1839.

Railroad travelling in Germany—A national propensity—The spirit of Dresden—A Quatuorzain written on the Bruhl Terrace—The sights and curiosities of the place—The music I heard at Dresden—A country walk—The opera-house—The "Euryanthe" of Weber—Its cast—Madame Schröder Devrient — Herr Tichatschek — The orchestra — The ugly chorus — Sketch of "Euryanthe" — The absurdity of its *Libretto*—Madame von Chèzy—"Cymbeline" destroyed—The chivalresque spirit of its music—The opening chorus—The part of *Adolar*—The part of *Euryanthe*; its brilliancy—Her *Bravura* in the third act, and its Shaksperian close—Strong effect produced by the music—"Der May"—The environs of Dresden—Schiller's closet—Weber's country house—Pillnitz—A court custom of Saxony—Royal amateurship (with a note from Dr. Burney)—Strange forms of royal patronage.

THIRTEEN years ago, the railroad travelling of Germany had features which were all its own.

In England, the tendency, from the first, was to whirl "the human parcel" from place to place along with an irresistible rapidity entirely precluding the possibility of thought, or conversation, or enjoyment; and to make of the journey a disagreeable, bewildering dream, compounded of several blasts of the shrill steam-whistle—a few tunnels—a few broken clamours, timid or troublesome, of passengers on their entrance and exit —perhaps a few broken limbs—the best part of which is its close. In Belgium more time for observation has been allowed: and rich farms, stately belfries embroidered with tracery and ornament, are to be seen as you are swept—more leisurely than at home—from one town to another. But there was in Belgium, at the period under notice, an uncertainty which kept the mind anxious. So many lines meet and diverge at Mechlin, and so awkwardly was the transmission of baggage managed in 1839-40, that it was seven chances to one but, while the pilgrim was upon his road to the Rubenses at Antwerp, his "mails" might be scouring along the rails to Liege. Hood's story of the bewildered lady, strong in her own foresight, who spent the day in travelling backwards and forwards betwixt

Ghent and Ostend, owing to the want of her proper understanding, and her own prudence "in never getting out," is hardly a caricature.* But betwixt Leipsic and Dresden was to be seen, in 1839-40, a national propensity in its ripest development;—I mean the disposition of the best-hearted hosts, and soundest instrumentalists

* Years after the above was written, I travelled one evening along the Baden line of railway with an excellent German—a University Professor to boot—who made Hood's whimsy whimsically real. We were both bound, it appeared, from Carlsruhe to Frankfort; and I was preparing to stop and to sleep at Heidelberg, where the Frankfort line comes in, with the intention of pursuing my journey by the first opportunity the following morning. The dear Professor was also desirous of arriving as early as possible at Frankfort; but he would go on to Mannheim to sleep (giving himself thereby some additional miles of distance), to return on the morrow to Heidelberg, from which he too would diverge.—I fancied he had friends at Mannheim. But no! "He was convinced," he said, "that all railway accidents arose from passengers hastily getting out; and he had made it his resolution never to stop at intermediate stations, but always to go to the far end." Much reference to the map was required to convince this careful traveller that he would be compelled to break his vow next morning, by leaving the railway at Heidelberg, when he arrived from Mannheim! At last, however, the fact was clearly demonstrated; and the matter ended in my fellow-traveller profiting by my wondrous experience and sagacity, and, like myself, passing the night at Heidelberg.—Twenty years hence, such an anecdote will read like a paragraph from the chronicles of *Gotham!*—1853.

of Europe, to stop on every possible occasion—"*etwas zu essen.*"

I cannot describe how whimsically this wonderful appetite struck me on my journeys to Dresden in 1839. The train I used started from Leipsic an hour after the early dinner; when the copious repast might surely, one would have thought, have sufficed for a part, at least, of the afternoon. No such thing. At every one of the six or eight stations between the two towns—fruit, cakes, cups of broth, glasses of brandy, squares of sodden pastry with plums imbedded therein, biscuits, sandwiches, plums, pears, and other garden *et cetera*, were proffered to the caravan, from baskets of hawkers, and in the station-houses. Nor were they proffered in vain: old and young, women and men—already provided, in nine cases out of ten, with a travelling provision against famine—partook of them with a zeal and an intrepidity which, every time I witnessed it, recalled to me *Petruchio's* disdainful exclamation—

"Nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat!"

Comfortable in beguiling the way as were these interludes, such are not precisely the best imaginable preparations for Dresden. The Saxon

capital, both on first sight and on a subsequent visit, has impressed me with a peculiar feeling of its elegance which is not to be described without the entertainer of it being considered Della Cruscan and fantastic—at least not in work-a-day prose.

ON THE BRUHL TERRACE,

OCTOBER, 1840.

THERE hangs a tranquil and peculiar spell
O'er dome, and ample bridge, and rapid stream,
And dim fantastic palace, where the gleam
Of ghostly shapes, methinks, would glimmer well
At dead midnight. Autumn should ever dwell,
Rich, fading town, with thee! Here I could dream
Whole days away o'er some sweet solemn theme
Of mystic Fancy, careless how the bell
Of noisy life importunately tolled
Its children to their tasks. Ay, and such hours,
By some esteemed more worthless than the flowers
Which drop in silence ere their bells unfold,
Show not our heaviest debt for wasted powers,
On Truth's eternal chronicle enrolled!

Even the excitements of the far-famed gallery, with its *Madonna del Sisto*, its Reading Magdalen, and its *Christo della Moneta*,—where I lingered for two hours every morning, till eye and mind could receive no more,—could not neutralize the agreeable and soothing impression which the stately Saxon city produced on my mind. Of

the ways of its people I know nothing beyond the universal report, which apportions to it a cheerful and cultivated society of refined intelligences. But I have never stayed in a town in which the idea of complete insulation brought with it so little of dreariness—where so many thoughts, and feelings, and fancies, seemed to rise up as companions. I can picture to myself no better residence for any one occupied in the absorbing task of imaginative creation; and, to push speculation one point further, I never passed the door of the house of Herr Tieck, who then lived in the Altmarkt, without feeling as if a certain harmony existed between his fantastic and spiritual tales, and the city of his adoption. This perhaps may be fond trifling; but the musical pleasures of Dresden, in 1839-40, were solid and real—marked with "a white stone" in the calendar of my experiences.—There, on my visit in 1839, I first made acquaintance with the "Euryanthe" of Weber.

The practicability of quickening musical appetite by a legitimate country walk, taken ten minutes before entering a theatre, was a pleasant variety in my play-going experiences. Suffering under no ordinary impatience to hear

a work I had so long ardently desired to hear —and my appetite piqued by the perpetual operatic disappointments I had been undergoing during my German progress,—I might have foreseen what the chimes told me just as I was leaving the beautiful Elbe-bridge for the space in front of the barn-like theatre,* namely, that I was three quarters of an hour too soon. Away, then, I strolled down through the Zwinger-gardens, along a solemn avenue of chestnut-trees, at the end of which stands a large orangery, and, turning through a court-yard, was directly in a *bona fide* meadow, stretching down to the placid Elbe, garnished with pollard trees, such as Paul Potter loved to paint, among which Paul Potter's comely cows were slowly going home to be milked; and divided by a brook—positively a brook, with stepping-stones. Perhaps sunset never made a lovelier picture of Dresden than on that evening. There was hardly an air to stir the leaves; smoke there was none to curl; and the sky, glowing with all the hues of gold, and crimson, and violet, made a festal pageant of the domes and spires

* Since my visit to Dresden in 1840, the new and magnificent theatre has been opened.

rising beyond the Elbe-bridge. The beauty of the weather, and the rarity of such a pleasure by way of prelude to an act of play-going, tempted me to loiter to the last possible moment. Yet, after finding myself comfortably installed in my *sperr-sitz*, I had still time to spare before the overture commenced,—time to say to myself, "Well, after all, poor Weber was perhaps better here than at Berlin!" I had been looking at the bright side of his Dresden residence,—the winning and picturesque beauty of its environs.

The cast which the peculiarly tidily-printed playbill revealed to me was strong. Madame Schröder Devrient played the part of *Euryanthe*, and Herr Tichatschek that of the hero *Adolar*. She was still acting with all the power and pathos that had earned for her in England the title of the "Queen of tears," and singing the terribly difficult music of the part with a force and freshness I found it totally impossible to account for, save on the hypothesis that some miracle had created her voice anew since she was last in London. For a moment it did not occur to me that the cause of Madame Schröder Devrient's apparently renovated clear-

ness and purity might lie in the flat diapason of the orchestra. It was so, however; the Dresden band being nearly half a tone lower than any I have ever heard. But this flatness threw over the whole performance of a powerful and brilliant orchestra, most carefully directed by Herr Reissiger, a languor which—knowing as I did the music well, and missing none of its points—puzzled me very nearly as much as the restored juvenility of the *prima donna*.

Among the tenors of Germany, Herr Tichatschek still bears a high reputation; and few, in any country, have ever crossed the stage with an ampler proportion of natural advantages. He is of the right height—handsome—his voice in 1839 was strong, sweet, and extensive, taking the *altissimo* notes of its register in chest tones. Then, too, he possessed a youthful energy of manner calculated to gain the favour of all who hear and see him. I have heard no one in Germany who was better qualified to sustain the glorious music belonging to the part of *Adolar*.

The Dresden chorus I found clear, forcible, and paying the utmost German attention to light and shade—far more satisfactory, in short,

than the chorus of Berlin. Some of the *soprani*, however, had an intolerably metallic harshness of tone in the upper notes of their voices, which set my teeth on edge, and made me shiver whenever I felt a *sforzando* coming on. The defect was forced upon notice most especially in Weber's opera; but I recognised it again, in 1840, in the slighter and more moderately composed music of "Masaniello." I think, too, that not even among our opera *figurantes* before Easter did I ever see such a regiment of ill-favoured women. One is never so struck by the obtrusiveness of ugliness on the French stage. Intrinsically frightful enough, as the Graces know, are some not merely of the back-ground figures, but of the principal personages who figure on the theatrical arenas of Paris; but, from Dejazet downwards, they contrive to turn awkwardness into grace, irregularity into piquancy, and Age itself "into favour and prettiness,"—by what spell, must remain a mystery which no familiarity can ever unravel to an English or a German inquirer.

But enough of these trifles and executive details, which, as the opera proceeded, broke upon me one by one in spite of the fascination

exercised over me by its music.—"Euryanthe" is too little known in England as yet. Some day it may become more familiar here, as one of the most remarkable expressions of passion in Music which the lyric drama possesses. Nothing short of some such excellence could have carried off a story so confused and incomprehensible as was furnished to poor Weber by way of text. It is difficult to understand what freak of prudery drove the German adaptors of the exquisite "Cymbeline" of Shakspeare so utterly to transform and distort and weaken its incidents. Why *Lysiart*, the boasting and malevolent *Iachimo* of the opera, should not of himself be sufficient to lie away the honour of its heroine, by way of winning his wager;—why *Eglantine*, the she-fiend associated with him, should bear such a mortal hatred to the heroine,—and how a ring stolen from a dead woman's tomb should be as damning a proof to *Adolar* of *Euryanthe's* infidelity as the original description of "the mole cinque-spotted," and the production of the ring from *Imogen's* own finger to the loyal *Leonatus*—are puzzles which can hardly fail to engage all who ever condescend to seek for reality and coherence

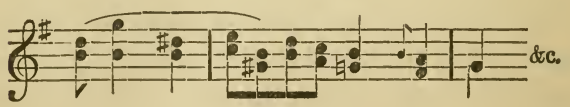
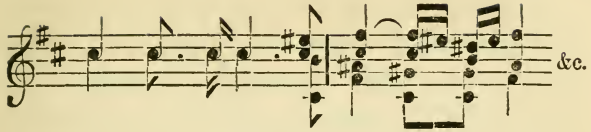
in a *libretto*. The impossibility of their solution, however, well nigh destroyed Weber's *chef-d'œuvre*, by making the work all but unintelligible.

It seems strange, that for the triumphant author of "Der Freischutz," no collaborator could be found more capable and distinguished than Madame von Chèzy. She has been described to me as that most doleful of all beings, an untidy, unhappy, unsuccessful woman of letters—a slatternly *Sappho*, from whom all men shrunk—eager, old, warm-hearted, and (if I mistake not) fat. I have heard an anecdote concerning the first night of "Euryanthe," at Vienna, the rueful pathos of which places it among the everyday tragedies over which nobody weeps, because the ugly and the old are the heroines. Among other incidents of that performance, I have heard of this poor Madame von Chèzy struggling over the benches in the hope of finding a seat to see her own opera,—hustled, mocked, and rudely treated, by the good-natured Viennese for whose pleasure she had been catering.—What a contrast betwixt the reception of the ill-requited, much-abused struggler, who, after all, gave Weber his text, and

the idolatry lavished upon Mademoiselle Sontag, the first *Euryanthe*, who only executed what was set down for her!—But, in spite of this twinge, when one thinks of the mortification of the battered old authoress, who can avoid wishing that some competent hand had set her opera book to rights? Even now, I cannot but fancy that something might still be done to relieve the incident on which the plot is made to turn, of its insipid absurdity, and, by clearing matters up, to give the drama a chance of a better position on the stage than, in its present form, it can ever hold.

Were I called upon to name the modern German opera which has, musically, the most excited me, I should cite "Euryanthe," at Dresden. So strong, indeed, was the excitement in the theatre, as to render me unconscious of the many crudities contained in the score. I felt carried away, not so much by a fervour as by a fever of music. One knows the composition to be in many places strained, in many more, patchy. The airs are constructed on unusual and arbitrary forms of rhythm; there is no prophesying, by the best-practised listener, of the change or chord which

is next to come. But these faults are felt in closet study far more than in stage intercourse: while, to compensate for them, we have character, colour, melody, and the boldest rendering of the strongest emotions — tenderness, wonder, pity, passion, terror, and ecstasy.

To instance a little,—let me call attention to the treatment of the chorus in the first scene, by way of illustrating Weber's mastery over character and colour. No higher and more chivalrous strain exists in music than the antiphonic song of knights and ladies which opens the story after the brilliant and stately overture has subsided. There is the joy of high-born youth and beauty in every note of the stanza given to the *soprani;* a touch of tenderness nothing short of Shaksperian in its close—

setting off, in the happiest contrast, the glorious burst of male voices which immediately succeeds. In this, the incidental shade of ruggedness, distinctive of the sex,—

—is hardly less masterly. How charming throughout, too, is the employment of the accompaniment!—which ever and anon resumes its measures, gay and jubilant, but by no means such as could be mistaken for those of peasant gaiety or jubilee—and which, at length, flows broadly forth into a minuet of such a grave and ample grandeur, as to remind us of the "solemn dancing" which formed so important a part of all old court festivities.

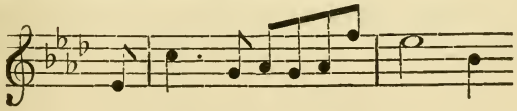
More marvellous is the use of the chorus in the *finale* to the second act: beginning with a flowing strain of knightly joy and homage; then—as the false *Iachimo* of the opera contrives, by his base artifices, to blacken the fame of the heroine past the possibility of her explanation or excuse—passing through the gradations of unbelief, inquiry, conviction, contempt, anathema! Recitative is hardly freer from trammels than this series of movements; and when, at last, the knights all turn away from *Euryanthe* as a traitress, the ban of their

indignation falls on the ear and on the heart with as much force in its obstreperous violence as if it were one of those old maledictions which had so terrible a power to crush and to annihilate in the days of Feudalism.

We have here, in a scene of the strongest emotion, perhaps the first, and not the least forcible examples of that recklessly courageous and dramatic use of the opera chorus, which Weber's fellow-pupil, Meyerbeer, has since employed with such consummate skill. It would be curious, had one the means, to trace how far such a step forward made in addition to dramatic resource was natural to the two masters, how far it may be ascribable to the training of their teacher, the eccentric and empirical Abbé Vogler. That he could teach counterpoint thoroughly seems to be denied by everyone, from Mozart downwards; but a coincidence worth looking into, lies in the fact, that his two famous pupils have successively evoked and employed a living spirit in musical drama which will never again be laid.

Again, the chivalresque tone which distinguishes "Euryanthe" is not more eminently displayed in the general treatment of the story

than in the delineation of its principal personages. —We may begin with *Adolar* the hero, who begins the opera, with one of Weber's happiest, most romantic melodies. The romance "*Unter blühn den Mandelbaümen*" is written in the French style of *couplet*—but there is a full-hearted and manly sweetness in the strain of which French composers have given us few examples. The whole hero's part bears the same true knightly stamp. He is, throughout, "brave and tender,"—whether in the scene where he throws down his gage to the asperser of *Euryanthe's* honour, when he repeats the martial subject of the earlier part of the overture—or whether, when, in his song of expectation in the second act, he gives—because he is alone—a broader vent to his manly rapture in that delicious second melody—



which, also, has been wrought into the prelude of the drama, to prepare the hearer for a love-story of engrossing depth and passion.

Very beautiful, again, in another style, though somewhat lacking simplicity, is *Euryanthe's en-*

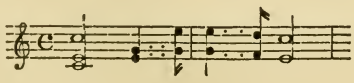
trata, "*Glöklein im Thale.*" How exquisite is here the orchestral effect caused by the alternation of the stringed and wind instruments, and the happy use of the searching and voluptuous tones of the *violoncello!* Not that the voice is either drowned, or secondary, or uninteresting, as in some of Spohr's songs, where the subtlety of instrumental texture claims admiration. Though the melody for the voice be somewhat forced, it is still kept uppermost in interest. The animation of the air rises as it proceeds; and the heart, at first blanked by pauses and suspenses totally new to it, is, by the close, raised to such full pleasure as I know not how else may be awakened, save by some of the deep, true, tender, and womanly outpourings of affection of Shakspeare's real *Imogen*—such an one, for instance, as the following, which, at the onset, gives us the key to her entire character:—

> "I did not take my leave of him, but had
> Most pretty things to say. Ere I could tell him
> How I would think on him, at certain hours,
> Such thoughts, and such; or I could make him swear
> The shes of Italy should not betray
> Mine interest and his honour; or have charged him
> At the sixth hour of morn, at noon, at midnight,

I am in heaven for him ; or ere I could
Give him that parting kiss, which I had set
Betwixt two charming words—comes in my father," &c.

More familiar than *Euryanthe's entrata* is her *bravura*, leading the quartett which closes the first act, and expressing the second change of the character—from tender recollection to delight in the approach of reunion. From this point her part is conducted to its close with a rare vividness and brilliancy. But while it embraces the extremes of rapture and despair, its passion is wondrously varied. For instance, how admirably different is the excitement of the duet in the second act—"*Hin nimm die seele mein*,"* from that of the *allegro* to *Euryanthe's* grand *scena* in the third act! There the delirious intensity of longing, quickened by a gleam of hope, rises to a height of intermingled ecstasy and pain—of panting suspense and anxious anticipation striving for utterance—with a vehe-

* In the main phrase of this—



it would almost seem as if Weber had borrowed his *motivo* from "Il Tancredi" of Rossini. But if the harshest construction

mence which seems as though it must hurry its victim onward to death or madness. As an example of rhythm capriciously broken for the production of the most exciting effects, there exist few specimens so effective as that air; especially when, by the entrance of the supporting chorus, on the return of the theme, its irregularity is brought into a clearer light.* The close of the scene, too, when the singer sinks exhausted by her emotion, and when the voices of the rough hunters, who bear her away

is to be put upon coincidence, the plagiarism is amply atoned for by the grace, variety, and intense expression of the second part;—how different from the mechanical braying of trumpets and beating of drums with which Italian composers, in their idleness or their incompetence, never fail to fill up the blank between the first enunciation of a theme and its repetition!

* Not to interrupt the flow of fantastic speculation, or to become unnecessarily tedious, I will spare the reader the passage in which I noted, after the lights, the shadows of "Euryanthe;" I mean the black and villanous characters of *Eglantine* and *Lysiart*. The latter is, musically, as splendid a creation as the hero and heroine. His duet with *Eglantine*, at the opening of the second act, and all his morsels of *solo* in the grand concerted pieces, rise to the highest point in the expression of evil passion and duplicity. His comrade in guilt is less intelligible, in spite of the care with which Weber has *labelled* her with a peculiarly significant and serpentine phrase. She is a mere *walking* Fury, and, thus, as superfluous to the interest which the story excites, as is the walking Lover or the walking Father of a sentimental comedy.

on a litter of boughs and leaves, die away into a grave and melancholy silence, is in the highest strain of picturesque invention. O, had Weber but been entrusted with such a situation and such poetry as occur in the original play, where the rudely-nurtured princes, bending over the dead body of *Fidele*,

> . . . . the bird
> Whom they had made so much of,

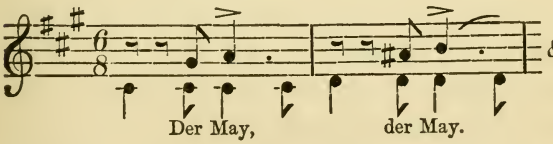
pour out their sorrow in the most deeply mournful and artlessly manly of all dirges,—delicate as the air, but rurally homely as the cavern and the trees to whose echoes it was sung,—what music might he not have written! To Beethoven might have belonged the *Lear*, and the *Othello*, and the *Macbeth* of Shakspeare; but to Weber, such dramas of romantic fantasy as the "Winter's Tale," "Cymbeline," and "The Tempest." He was, what Hogg delighted to call himself, "the king of the mountain and faëry school."—His is music instinct with the spirit of that olden time, when there were omens whispered in the woods, and battles foretold by the blood-red phantoms that brandished their arms and waved their banners in the

West. The fancy of it is not untinctured with superstition; the hue upon it is either the pearly light of Dream-land, or that gorgeous tint which streams through some blazoned window garnished "with many a quaint device!" Not only have his airs and melodies a *costume*—in their merriment there is an echo of the elemental world, as well as in their sadness an appeal to Man's inner heart. Every thing in Nature that is wildest and blithest—the laughing of brooks as they leap from stone to stone, the glancing of early sunshine over the ocean when its waters are curled by the blithest of autumn breezes, the ecstasy of birds in the full enjoyment of life and summer—has a part and a reflection in Weber's livelier music.

Child of Romance! how varied was thy skill!—
  Now, stealing forth in airy melody,
  Such as the west wind breathes along the sky,
When golden evening lingers on the hill;
Now, with some fierce and startling chord didst chill
The blood to ice, and bathe with dew the brow;
  Anon, thou didst break forth in brilliant flow
Of wild rejoicing, such as well might fill
  The bright sea-chambers where the mermaids play:
All elemental sounds thou didst control;

The roar of rocking boughs,—the flash of spray,—
The earthquake's muttered threat,—the thunder's roll,—
Scattering, like toys, their changes through thy lays,
Till wonder could no more, and rapture silenced praise. *

Such are some of the thousand associations and fantasies that, long hoarded, received full justification as I sat that night listening to "Euryanthe."—As I bent my way home, when the curtain had fallen, and all was still and dark, they bore me company across the long Elbe-bridge. They mixed themselves up that night in my dreams:—no bad preparation for a two days' ramble into Saxon Switzerland and the Elbe valley;—and I got into a little carriage I had hired for the excursion, at six o'clock on the following morning, to the tune of—



Indeed, the sunshine was so glorious and the air so exquisitely balmy, that, but for the yellow leaves, I could easily have cheated myself into fancying that the flower-month was come again.

* "Garland of Musicians."

The environs of Dresden are beautiful: the suburban houses show more marks of a refined taste in floriculture than I have elsewhere seen in Germany. The road rises gently; and the city, seen as I then beheld it,—with the mist of early day wreathing the beehive-like dome of Our Lady's Church and the spires round it, and the Elbe below and behind the bridge lying under a mantle of deep empurpled shadow,—makes as fair a town-picture as one of those splendid clusters of Italian architecture which Gaspar Poussin loved to build in his landscapes. Advancing further, the banks of the Elbe are striped and dotted with vineyards, among which the rough road winds; almost every half mile curving so as to pass through or escape some of the clean red-roofed *witz*-es (*witz* being as favourite a termination to the names of villages near Dresden as *rode* is in the Harz) which, half composed of garden-houses, half of cottages, are as tempting nooks as poet or musician could retreat to for summer residence. Tottering over the road, like the last tower of a broken-down fortress, and clinging to the wall which keeps the soil up to the roots of the vines, a tiny closet is shown, where Schiller

wrote his "Don Carlos." Another little mansion—but a modest one even for a house in a German *weinberg*—saw the birth of Weber's "Oberon." This last is about half-way betwixt the beautiful city and that wild and elvish district, where gigantic rocks, of every menacing and capricious form, strangely overlean the Elbe, and seem to tell of some such miracle performed in the days of "the good people" as was wrought by him who

. . . . "cleft Eildon hills in three."

I gazed wistfully at the cabinets where the poet and musician had carried on their alchemy; but more, I confess, to possess myself of a distinct impression of their aspect, than with that intense enthusiasm which some enjoy on all due occasions:—happy in having feelings like chimes, which cannot fail to answer to the touch, whatever be the mood of the moment, or whose-ever hand it be that puts down the key.—Yet it was impossible, even for my slow self, not to be alive to the influences which such a picturesquely-placed habitation might have exercised over one whom I have always fancied to have been largely acted upon by the sights and

sounds of Nature.—In another point of view, however, on regarding them from a distance, the environs of Dresden seem to me less friendly to the genius of Weber. Not far from this summer residence of his is Pillnitz—the country palace of the Kings of Saxony. I only looked towards it that morning as towards a building of the heaviest possible architecture; the work of some German Vanbrugh. Had I known as much as I have since done, it might not have been the least suggestive station of my Elbe pilgrimage in 1839.

In that dull and grand-looking mansion was preserved, in the composer's time, and, for aught I know, exists to this day, a rag of feudalism, to speak metaphorically,—one of the old condescensions of Royalty, by which the earthenware was allowed to approach the porcelain of society, and Cloth of Frieze to become acquainted with the splendours of Cloth of Gold. The rulers of Saxony dined in public, and dined at two o'clock. More than one friend has graphically described to me the primitive and old-world figures that feasted the eyes of those admitted to the balcony, where common men might learn what and how their rulers eat.

There came homely old princes, with white hair, and breeches which never knew what braces meant;—a watch in each fob (in the exploded *macaroni* fashion), and long, long *queues*, those simplest of all symbols of etiquette. There might be seen stately and substantial ladies, decorated in all the German *grandezza* which so amused Bettina when Goethe's mother dressed herself to receive Madame de Stäel. There might be smelt the miscellaneously arranged odours of things savoury and things sweet which distinguish a German dinner. There might be heard (O shame to a music-loving family* like the Royalties of Saxony!), among

* One of the pleasantest passages in Dr. Burney's "Musical Tour in Germany" describes the visit he paid Nymphenburg (a palace three miles from Munich), where he was presented to the Electress Dowager of Saxony, whose opera of "Talestri" was then on the point of being performed at the Bavarian Court. Her brother, the Elector, too, was a fair player on the *viol da gamba*. And the Doctor speaks in high strains of his performance, as well as of the style of the Dowager's singing, which had been taught her by Porpora. After an evening spent in the interchange of musical conversation, when his Highness and the court supped in the same great hall and public manner in which they had dined, "I went," says Burney, "with Guadagni and the rest of the principal performers, to make my court during the supper. * * * The lords in waiting offered us refreshments, and the Elector condescended to ask Guadagni if he gave a

the noises of knives and forks and the bustling of perspiring servitors, the tinkle of a pianoforte, or the screech of an Italian air, sung by some well-worn *cantatrice*, who had been lured from the macaroni and *polenta* of her own land to become a fixture at the court of Saxony. And those who looked to see who the pianist might be (compelled, poor soul! to wear a full court dress for the occasion) must have turned away, wondering at the odd forms taken by the much-vaunted patronage of Music in Germany, —especially if they were gifted with the spirit of prophecy, and had already picked up the conviction that a new and brilliant genius was abroad in the person of Carl Maria von Weber!

I confess, whenever I reflect upon such an appropriation of the services of Genius as this— when I think of the "*Concert-Stück*" disturbed by the stirring of a salad, or of the exquisite *Sonata* in A flat, Op. 39, passing unheard in the midst of the discussion of those mighty puddings in

supper to the Englishman and his other company; meaning Panzachi, Rauzzini, and Naumann: he answered, that he should give us bread and cheese and a glass of wine. 'Here,' cried the Elector, emptying two dishes of game on a plate, 'send that to your apartments.'"

which a German cook excels—the corruption of Radicalism rises strong within me. I verily believe, that had I known the nature of the duty which the position of Weber at Dresden demanded from him, while I was in the full glow of enthusiasm consequent on the enjoyment of "Euryanthe," I must have shaken the dust of Pillnitz from my feet, with something of a bitter and disdainful feeling,—instead of turning round and admiring the fine but heavy group which it made when seen in conjunction with two embrowned chestnut trees, ere a sudden bend in the road to Löhmen hid it from my sight.

CHAPTER II.

ORGAN-PLAYING.—1840.

Characteristics of the organ—Visit to Herr Schneider—Inaccessibility of the Dresden houses—The *Sophien-Kirche*—Its interior—The organ by Silbermann—Its sweetness of tone—Herr Schneider's performance—Bach's fugues—Improvisation—Moral of the instrument—Sunday morning service—*Corales*—Admirable accompaniment—Henry Isak—Catholic church—Cremona violins—Another Silbermann organ—Flatness of Diapason—Morlacchi's music—Picturesque group—Artificial *Soprani*—A Sabbath thought in Dresden—A postscript concerning the Silbermann organs.

I LIKED Dresden even better in 1840 than in 1839. The weather was brighter—the town seemed more tranquilly engaging; and the pictures in the Gallery had taken the look of old familiar friends.—Dresden, too, was doomed to be a place of musical compensation to me for failures and disappointments encountered elsewhere. The

repayment for Berlin shortcomings, which, in 1839, I found in my first introduction to "Euryanthe," took, in 1840, a form more precious—if that could be—because more unique, by bringing me acquainted with the consummate organ-playing of Herr Schneider.

I will not libel any musician by asking him if he be fond of the instrument. The further removed he be from personality in his preferences of Art—the more devotedly addicted to Thought in its noblest, if not most excursive, flights—the more exquisitely will he relish, the more eagerly will he return to those grave and sublime pleasures—to those oracular utterances, as it were, in which musical Truth and Poetry, of the highest order, make themselves known. After a London season of fever and competition and excitement, when the newest wonder-player has been hardly heard before he has been pushed off his stool of popularity by the newest singer—when one strain of music has been hurried out of the memory by some other of a more seizing piquancy,—to find in the midst of the comparative quiet of a German town, and the yet more modest tranquillity of an occupied but not a dazzling career, an instrumentalist who,

in his way, might challenge the Liszts and the Paganinis of his century,—was as great a gratification to the mind as his artistic exhibitions were a delight to the ear. And to me the gratification was doubled, inasmuch as it came by way of sequel to the traces of Bach I had been exploring at Leipsic.

The weariness which the paltry "Die Beiden Schützen" of Lortzing, at the Opera House, had left upon my spirits, was only half effaced by a long morning among the Venetian pictures in the Gallery: when, as I was sitting at dinner, on a certain Saturday, a promised note of introduction was handed to me, which privileged me to present myself at Herr Schneider's door. By the way, this simple ceremony was in 1840 by no means so easily to be performed at Dresden as elsewhere. In no town that I have ever visited was it so difficult to find out your acquaintances. Bells were scarce; door-plates, so far as I could see, were utterly unknown. The first floor knew nothing of the cunning of the second—especially when the latter was inquired for in bad English German; and in every house I approached—to judge from the silence and impenetrability and difficulty of access which

prevailed—the inhabitants might, one and all, have been suffering under an epidemic dun-*phobia*. To the third story, however, of the mansion where Herr Schneider carries on his own studies and directs those of others, I was guided by the full chord of many voices; and, for the one only time in Dresden, I found him whom I came to seek without that running to and fro, and that hesitation of servants, which take so much of its edge off the pleasure of afirst visit.

It was late in the day when I paid my visit; and the artist had been occupied among his musical avocations since the lark's hour of rising. But when I told him how short the duration of my stay in Dresden must be, he sent for the keys of the church and the bellows-blower, as if he was doing the most natural thing instead of the greatest favour imaginable — without any superfluous words between us. Indeed, profuse thanks would have suited ill with his hearty plainness of manner. And we were out of the house, and on the road to one of the rarest musical pleasures I ever enjoyed, as if we had known one another for years, within ten minutes of his breaking the seal of Mendelssohn's friendly letter.

The *Sophien-Kirche*, or Evangelical Church, which we reached after passing down two or three of the dark and narrow streets in which Dresden abounds, is one of those bleak and melancholy Lutheran buildings where the destroyer and the image-breaker have left their visible traces. It once belonged to a Franciscan convent; and a superbly enriched portal, opening upon the *Kloster Platz*, remains to tell what the rest of the building has been. Its interior aspect is yet more fragmentary, and clearly indicative of sack and plunder. The church is supported by a double row of columns, with a large and irregular gallery stretching round one half of it. The vault and pillars are debased by parsimonious whitewash: a few birdcage-like pews are hung up and down on its high walls: it has a few quaint old pictures, a mouldering monument or so, surmounted by a crucifix; and the same papistical symbol above the dingy *rococo* of the high altar. The fading of daylight gave these objects that sad and sombre hue which Time has imparted to more than one picture, where a like assemblage has been combined by Weenix or some other such painter of interiors. There was something, too, in the reverberation

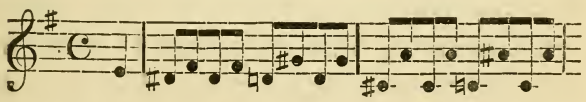
of our feet, as we went up the gallery stairs, which said more to my fancy than it would be at all discreet to print. The best got-up scene could not have been made so appropriate for the music of meditation — which organ-music is.

Herr Schneider's instrument stands in a corner of the gallery, clad in a white case with silvered pipes, and decked out with a quantity of *rococo* gilt garlands. It has only two key-boards, each four octaves and a half, in visible register; thirty-four stops; and a long pedal-board, nearly as well worn as St. Peter's toe in the Vatican. The sound proceeding from the first handful of keys put down, informed me of the neighbourhood of something surpassing after its kind. This is one of the Silbermann organs; and never heard I pipes of such a ripe and fascinating sweetness of tone, from the lowest *elephant* pedal C to the *skylark* C *altissimo;*—no hissing, no wheezing, no lumbering, no growling, — none of that ferocity of sound which makes some of our famous English specimens surgical to the ear. Compared, indeed, with aught in modern organ-building, the Silbermann instruments, at Dresden, are what the sumptuous

ruby glass of the Middle Ages is to the ripest-red piece of new Bohemian manufacture. Only a few weeks before I had been listening to our own noble organs at Christchurch in London, and in the Town-hall at Birmingham. A few weeks afterwards I was admiring a magnificent musical structure in progress of erection in the Westminster Abbey of the French—the cathedral at St. Denis. So that I was not without some opportunity of comparison, to warrant me in simile-making: and it is to be remembered that, as regards tone, the difference between player and player is little to be felt in the case of the instrument in question.

In all that regards hand, and foot, and mind —firmness of the first, brilliancy of the second, and concentration of the third—Herr Schneider was more excellent, after his kind, than his organ. Drawing out a dear shabby old book from his depository, he asked me to choose which of Bach's grand fugues he was to play me; and, almost ere I could mention those with which I was most familiar, had begun to add to my treasure by opening one in B minor, which then I had not heard. Those who treat organ-playing as "a black business," to which

they bend themselves with frowning brows, and coat-sleeves turned up half-way to the shoulders —the school of kickers, and swingers to and fro, who make much exertion cover up very little skill—might have taken a lesson from this admirable artist, whose hands, as they glided away over the keys ("*worked away*" is the established phrase), were bringing out into their fullest glory all those magnificent chains of sound—all those replies, and suspenses, and accumulations, which, with a calm but never-tiring munificence, the noble old *Cantor* of the *Thomas-Schule* has lavished in his compositions. Perhaps a finer specimen of these does not exist than in the fugue in E minor, with which Herr Schneider next indulged me; where the subject—



spreading in form like a wedge, offers such excellent scope for the amplification of science and the arrangement of climax. I withdrew to the further corner of the gallery, where twilight was now fast sinking; and, while listening to this marvellous performance, lost the personality both of composer and the performer,

more completely, perhaps, than I have ever done. It was neither Bach nor Schneider: the building was filled, to running over, with august and stately Music; and the old childish feeling of mystery and delight which, in the days when I was sparingly admitted to the acquaintanceship of any instrument whatsoever, the gigantic sounds of the organ used to awaken in me, came back.

After one or two more glorious displays of entire mastery over the key and pedal-board—"It is too dark for us to see any more of Bach," said my liberal host; "so you must excuse what I am going to do:" and, with that, he at once struck off into an improvisation of rare beauty of figure, and affluence of device. The subject was not at all a recondite one; simple and bold, and at first I fancied a little drily treated: what, indeed, is there that would not sound so after the unfoldings of Bach? But, whether the admirable artist was excited by the keen relish I showed, or whether it is the nature of such powers as his to sustain and to excite themselves, —as he went on, the depth of his science was surpassed by the brilliancy of his fancy. Taken merely in its most matter-of-fact sense, as a

display which proved nothing, here were memory, combination, promptitude, invention, and mechanical skill, united. I may be laughed at, but I could not help imagining that the exercise of a power at once implying thought, self-mastery, and a patient use of physical strength, could hardly have been carried to so high a perfection without its favourable moral influences; and that, if it were so, herein, and not from their being erected in churches, might lie the superior sacredness of organs beyond other instruments—herein some holiness in the performance of the music written for them.—By the time that Herr Schneider had brought his improvisation to a close, I could hardly distinguish either himself or organ from among the mass of gloomy shadows that had fallen round me; and I left the church in that pleasantly thoughtful state which suits so well with Dresden, and in which there is rest and not excitement.—Lights were gleaming up and down in the windows of the high houses surrounding the *Neumarkt:* here and there a solitary footfall was to be heard, the sounds of daily traffic being for the most part over.

At nine on the following morning I was again

at Herr Schneider's elbow, in the organ-loft of the *Sophien Kirche*, to bear him company through the services of the morning. He had warned me that the plain forms of Lutheran worship forbade his exercising his craft with anything like fantasy; but I would not have exchanged what I did hear for the most elaborate performance which hands and feet in concord could have completed. Before the service commenced, to an ample congregation, he treated us to a brief prelude on the full organ, of great majesty and brilliancy, as clear in design, and as symmetrical in elaboration, as though it were an *impromptu fait à loisir*. Then, while accompanying the psalms—five or six of which were most admirably sung by a choir of eighteen boys and young men—the extent of resource brought by him to bear on what might be esteemed a prosaic task was to me little less astonishing than the force he had shown in mastering the difficulties of Bach.* The interludes between the

* If some will understand the nervousness with which those who have fervently admired any work of art or artist, return to either after a long interval, more will enter into my pleasure on recently convincing myself that the praise above expressed should be heightened, not abated, were the paragraph to be written anew. I was enabled, in October last, to benefit by Herr

verses were substantially and solidly dignified, yet sufficiently rich in ideas to set up for a twelvemonth some of the renowned improvisers I have heard; while the artful and unexpected management of the stops, so as to produce every

Schneider's playing yet more largely than I did on my earlier visits to Dresden; and more clearly, than I could formerly, did I discern his supremacy in the treatment of the highest among instruments. It is not the least among the inequalities of the lot of Genius, that while Paganinis have libraries written in their honour, and Catalanis can buy estates out of the surplus of their gains, an artist possessing gifts of a higher order than either possessed, and superior to both in having put all executive difficulties beneath his feet, should be known in a circle so comparatively limited, and should count his modest gains in copper as compared with their gold.—It is well that something beyond these possessions goes to the making of happiness; that even in the world of imagination as well as a feverish life, there should be a serene life: contenting the ambitions of those who lead it. In this point of view, it is pleasant to think of so highly-endowed, active, and cheerful a man as Herr Schneider; full of quiet energy; satisfied within the round of his daily duties; not wholly without recognition from the outer world—of which the relish may be all the more intense, from its being rare in proportion to the remarkable claims recognized. Time has not yet touched this magnificent player.—It is all the more needful to add such a note, from the failure made by this admirable artist when he was this year brought to London, to exhibit as a concert attraction. The causes of his failure were too obvious to any one acquainted with German life and habits, or with the peculiar instrument on which Herr Schneider played, to require explanation or apology; but, with the general public, some testimony like the above may perhaps be not wholly useless in 1853.

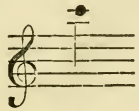
variety of *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, entirely precluded the occupation of the swell. Though I stood close by, I was unable, from a want of familiarity with the manipulations of the instrument, and the rapidity with which the changes were executed, to take any note of the successions and mixtures of stops employed. *Receipts* in such a matter are of little use to the half-taught, and none to the full-grown, artist.

Between the *corales*, which, thus sung and thus accompanied, I would fain have had crystallized for the benefit of all English choirs (could the miracle of the tunes frozen in *Munchausen's* horn be repeated), I confess myself to have been busier in turning over the venerable and well-thumbed music-books, and gathering what I could from their pages, than in trying to translate the drowsy and not very clear accents of the *pfarrer* into a service I could follow. There is much to be said some future day about these German psalm-tunes: a store of pleasant anecdote belongs to them. One of the most beautiful, for instance, that I heard that morning—Nun ruhen alle Wälder—had been in its early days as secular a melody as "Rousseau's Dream." It was the composition (so M. Mainzer had in-

formed me in his amusing "Esquisses Musicales") of the famous Henry Isak, on the occasion of his being summoned from Inspruck to Munich three hundred years ago—a farewell tune, which had got into every German mouth, and was seized hold of by the Reformers, on Rowland Hill's principles of turning profane music to good account. Harmonized, and finely sung by many voices, as I heard it, it seemed unfit for any service save that of the Temple. Other of the tunes were by Herman, Pretorius, Crüger, Dr. Martin Luther himself; and in many antiphonal parts of the service the Ambrosian and Gregorian chants seemed to have been retained, as well as the Popish crucifix and candles on the altar.

Without any levity intended, the traveller may be of all musical religions in Dresden without the slightest discomfort; for the order of divine worship admits of his participating in the Catholic services at the Court church after the Lutheran church has poured out its congregation. The two buildings stand as near to each other as their spirit is widely apart. Each, however, has its Silbermann organ. There is a third in the *Frauen-Kirche* (the most theatrical-looking

church I ever entered), which I did not hear, the Catholic instrument being reputed as the finest. The musical services in which it bears a part have enjoyed high repute among the tourists. I had been told to listen to some Cremona violins in the orchestra, of a singular perfection of tone: I had been warned, too, that the choir contained a pair of those now happily obsolete curiosities which were the consequence of the Romish prohibition of female assistance in the service of the Mass. The Catholic church, though its interior has a somewhat waste air, from the absence of gilding and pictorial ornament, is a spacious and handsome edifice. The nave was crowded with the congregation—the men on the one side, on the other the women. Some of the royal family were to be seen from their tribune overlooking the altar; and there were the tinkling bells, and the incense-clouds, and the gorgeously-clad priests,—which, I am free to confess, in place of offending me as the "mummery" which stern Protestant travellers seem to think it a point of conscience to account them, never fail to quicken my Papistical sympathies by striking the imagination, without, I would fain hope, spoiling the heart. But the reverberation in the building is

so great, that the organ, though most cleverly played by Herr Klengel, and a thorough Silbermann in its silver-sweet tones, did not assert its superiority over its kinsman I had just been hearing. The sweetness, again, of the Cremona violins, led by Herr Lipinski, was largely impaired to my ear by the flatness of their pitch, which, a twelvemonth before, had tempted me to believe in the rejuvenescence of Madame Schröder Devrient's

The tone of the orchestra sounded mawkish, independently of the intrinsic savourlessness of the Mass which it was performing—a *fade* composition by Morlacchi was that.—What a sickly contrast to those stout old Lutheran tunes!—As we were going up to the music gallery, a child with long German hair, and in a dark palmer-like cloak, came up to my kind *cicerone*, and, putting its little hand in his, trotted on by his side a little way: precisely the figure which the neo-Catholic painters dress in a surplice, and arm with a branch of lilies, for some sacred picture: precisely the figure, too, to set off my honest and kind-hearted con-

ductor ; and as the sun fell upon them through a window-slit, as they were mounting the massive graystone staircase to the music gallery, I thought I had never seen a more engaging picture.—The little door was thrown open which was to admit me to a place among the fiddles and drums. While my foot was as yet on the threshold, out came a long-drawn sound—parcel squeak, parcel warble—which had well nigh driven me back with disgust at its shrillness and its falsity,—and shock at its disproportion to the six-feet-high and burly human creature whence it issued. In its days of perfection, however, I could have fancied that it possessed such subtle union of piercing and oily tone as distinguishes an oboe; and, bad as it was,—and bad as was the second *soprano*, of like quality, which went along with it,—I could readily conceive that there might lie in its use peculiarities of effect which can be produced by no other vocal organs. But even this conviction, honestly stated in despite of antipathy, could not reconcile me to the far-famed music of the Catholic church in Dresden. There is decrepitude in it : the feebleness of old age without its venerable aspect. An instrumental symphony performed in one portion of

the service was little newer in its forms than if Hullmandel or Graun had devised it. Somehow or other, the Italian style—whether in composition or performance, in church or opera—becomes intolerable in Germany.

The enthusiast had better, if he would keep the devout feelings which the massive congregational singing in the Evangelical Church is calculated to inspire, give himself up to an hour of silent meditation before the *Madonna di San Sisto* in the gallery:—at least, I know that her holy and spiritual smile bore me company along my favourite walk on the Brühl Terrace, in the quiet half hour which elapsed last before my joining the mid-day table.

THE MADONNA DI SAN SISTO.

A SABBATH THOUGHT IN DRESDEN.

Couldst thou, O man! with thine own will, uprear
Thyself so nigh Divinity? thus show
The mysteries of the heavens? or didst thou bow
To Power invisible, with child-like fear
Submitting hand and heart?—It was so. Here
Is GOD, not man! yon forms angelic glow
With His own radiant spirit.—Art is slow,
Fruitless, and cold, by this unblest. Draw near
And worship, then, my soul!—'tis holy ground,
Nor thou idolatrous. The King of kings,

Who folds Eternity beneath his wings,
Yet doth with love his smallest child surround,
Is here, too, manifest with glory crowned,
And calls on thee for praise, through fading human things!

October 25, 1840.

A postscript may, not impertinently, be added with regard to the organs at Dresden and its vicinity—or rather, perhaps, with regard to the organs built by the Silbermann family, which may be studied in the Saxon capital and its vicinity with great advantage.

Subsequent experience and opportunities for comparison would dispose me to emphasize rather than to mitigate the foregoing panegyric. Perfectly aware, as every one who thinks must be, of the amount of adventitious effect gained by locality in the case of all organs—not to speak of such delicate matters as association, the humour of the listener, &c. &c., which have, however, a large part in determining pleasure — there is still, I apprehend, a large and important balance in favour of the beauty of tone of these Silbermann organs. As regards modern organ-building, an exception is claimed by

Mooser's admirable instrument at Swiss Fribourg; while among organs of an elder date, due honour must be done to such magnificent structures as Gabler's fantastically-planned but beautiful organ at the monastery of Weingarten in Suabia, and also to the splendid and sonorous Dutch organs at Haarlem, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Groningen—and even at Gouda, where the traveller who goes up to look at the painted glass, may, perchance, find his ear caught by a wonderful *vox humana* from the "loft," telling that a poor player cannot spoil a fine instrument. —Then, the Austrian monasteries have their grand organs, possessing a sweetness, pomp, and authority, in noble harmony with the palatial grandeur of the holy houses which they help to furnish.—Many of the above I have now heard, but I have met with nothing comparable with the best of the Silbermann instruments. There is an admirable one, sadly neglected, at the miner's town of Frieberg—organ and town (if not town and organ) well worth the day's excursion from Dresden, which a visit to both will demand. If Music had as many poetical, as the art has practical writers, a more fascinating subject would hardly be found than a pilgrimage

to the great organs of Europe—with their localities, their history, and their associations, duly counted. For the instrument is like a church or other edifice—a thing which becomes of itself a shrine of resort and recollection, gaining thereby an adventitious, and legendary, and progressive interest, such as belong to no old violin, or harp,—scarcely, even, to the trombones discovered under the lava of the buried cities of the kingdom of Naples, which have been revived, multiplied, and circulated, to the use and comfort of modern orchestral composers.—1853.

CHAPTER III.

THE OPERA FROM 1840 TO 1848.

Retirement of Madame Schröder Devrient—Character of this lady—Her *Fidelio*—Her *Lady Macbeth*—Comparison with Madame Pasta—Appearance of Herr Wagner as composer—"Rienzi"—The Court and the Barricades—Herr Wagner in Paris—His "*Fliegende Hollander*"—His "*Tannhaüser*"—Sketch of the story—Analysis of the music—Reception of the opera at Dresden—Arrogance of Herr Wagner in his judgment of former composers and of himself—Some theory of his peculiarities as representing the times we live in.

In the interval betwixt the years 1840 and 1848, the losses of the Dresden Opera were heavier than its gains. The great actress who threw all her strength and emotion into Weber's Shakspearian opera, ceased to appear on the stage; and the creative efforts made in the theatre, did not bring to light a new genius so much as a new element of decay and destruction for music.

The decline of Madame Schröder Devrient was more rapid than it should have been in a singer who is some years younger than the century.—But, in truth, a singer the lady never was, though she promised to become one in the early days when she appeared as *Pamina* in "Die Zauberflöte" at Vienna. Her voice, since I have known it, was capable of conveying poignant or tender expression, but was harsh, and torn—not so inflexible as incorrect. —It is a mistake to fancy that the German *prime donne* decline to attempt making an effect with executive brilliancy; they are as prodigal of *roulades* and shakes as the rest of the sisterhood—giving, however, the attempt in place of the reality; and only when their incompetency is made evident by comparison, falling back on that classical defence which sounds so well, costs so little, and has deceived so many,—"*What would you have? I am a German singer.*"—Madame Schröder Devrient resolved to be *par excellence* "the German dramatic singer." Earnest and intense as was her possession of the parts she attempted, her desire of presenting herself was little less vehement.—There is no possibility of an opera being

performed by a company, each of whom should be as resolute as she was never to rest, never for an instant to allow the spectator to forget his presence. She cared not whether she broke the flow of the composition, by some cry hardly on any note, or in any scale — by even *speaking* some word, for which she would not trouble herself to study the right musical emphasis or inflexion—provided, only, she succeeded in continuing to arrest the attention. Hence, in part, arose her extraordinary success in "Fidelio." That opera contains, virtually, only one acting character,—and with her it rests to intimate the thrilling secret of the whole story, to develope this link by link, in presence of the public, and to give the drama the importance of terror, suspense, and rapture when the spell is broken, by exhibiting the agony and the struggle of which she is the incessant victim. If the devotion, the disguise, and the hope of *Leonora*, the wife, were not for ever before us, the interest of the prison-opera would flag and wane into a cheerless and incurable melancholy. This Madame Schröder Devrient took care that it should never do. From her first entry upon the stage, it might

be seen that there was a purpose at her heart, which could make the weak strong, and the timid brave; quickening every sense, nerving every fibre, arming its possessor with disguise against curiosity, with persuasion more powerful than any obstacle, with expedients equal to every emergency. Though in what may be called the culminating point of the drama—the grave-digging scene in the vault—Malibran was the more fearful of the two, by her intense southern fervour, which blazed the brighter for its having been so forcibly constrained,—as regards the entire treatment of the part, Madame Schröder Devrient had the advantage. There was a life's love in the intense and trembling eagerness with which she passed in review the prisoners, when they were allowed to come forth into the air—for *he* might be among them! There was something subduing in the look of speechless affection with which she at last undid the chains of the beloved one, saved by her love — the mere remembrance of which makes the heart throb, and the eyes fill. — In "Norma," and "La Sonnambula," Madame Schröder Devrient failed, owing to her deficiency in vocal accomplish-

ment. In the former, too, she too freely indulged in the tendency of the Germans to attitudinize, when a queen or a priestess is the personage to be enacted.—I thought her *Valentine*, in "Les Huguenots," too much of a virago. There was not a touch of the French noble's daughter in her demeanour; she was the impetuous, angry, persecuted woman, whose hour of virgin elegance and virgin reserve had long been over.—But in another less popular work, the impression left by her on me was deep. This was in M. Chèlard's "Macbeth;" an opera which, in spite of the preposterous arrangement of the *libretto*, and of some music little less preposterous in its difficulty (considering it as calculated for German songstresses), contains some good points—some fine concerted pieces. None of these, however, dwell in my memory so vividly as the demeanour of the *Lady Macbeth*. One could not look at her without at once recollecting the ideal which Mrs. Siddons is reported to have conceived of this "grand, fiendish" character (to use her own epithets). "She had an idea," says Mrs. Jameson, "that *Lady Macbeth* must, from her Celtic origin, have been a small, fair, blue-eyed woman.

Bonduca, Fredegonde, Brunehault, and other Amazons of the Gothic ages, were of this complexion." Save in stature, the great German operatic actress (daughter by the way to the great *Lady Macbeth* of Germany, "*die grosse* Schröder") gave full justification to this fancy. With an alluring and dignified grace of manner was combined an aspect of evil—a sinister, far-reaching expression in her eyes, all the more terrible for their being at variance with those hues and contours which we have been used to associate with innocence and the tender affections. That which makes the flesh creep, in the name of "the *White* Devil,"* spoke in every line of Madame Schröder Devrient's face—in her honeyed and humble smile, as she welcomed the doomed King; in the mixture of ferocity and blandishment thrown by her into the scene of the murder; in the ghastly soliloquy of the

* When Nature can be *contradicted* by the might of power and passion within the frame, the effect is always more fearful than when she co-operates with sinister deeds and emotions by sinister preparations. Thus, there are few personations that I have heard so often referred to for their terrible fascination as the *Lucrezia Borgia* of Madame Ungher;—an undersized, colourless woman, without any extraordinary beauty, nobility, or wickedness of countenance.

soul that waked when the body was asleep. When I think of Pasta, as *Medea*, watching the bridal train pass by her, with her scarlet mantle gathered round her, the figure of Madame Schröder Devrient's *Lady Macbeth*, too, rises, as one of those visions concerning which young men are apt to rave and old men to dote. Apart from its musical interest, the stage has had few more striking personations.

But, except in the right of this inborn, inbred genius, the German and the Italian artist can hardly be mentioned on the same page. What Pasta *would* be, in spite of her uneven, rebellious, uncertain voice—a most magnificent singer — Madame Schröder Devrient did not care to be; though Nature, I have been assured, by those who heard her sing when a girl, had blessed her with a fresh, delicious *soprano* voice. In this respect, she is but one among the hundreds who have suffered from the ignorance and folly of German connoisseurship — from the obstinacy of national antipathy, which, so soon as Germany began to imagine the possibility of possessing an opera of its own, made it penal to sing with grace, taste, and vocal self-command; because such were the charac-

teristics of the Italian method.—Had she been trained under a wiser dispensation, Madame Schröder Devrient might have been singing by the side of Madame Sontag at this very day; and, when she retired, might have left behind her the character of a great dramatic vocalist, instead of the fame of a powerful actress who appeared in some German operas.

The Opera House at Dresden, during the years preceding the Revolution of 1848, also witnessed the production of certain musical dramas, by one who has since made some noise in the world, and who is likely to make more—noise, strictly speaking,—not music. I mean Herr Wagner, whose "Rienzi" had already been given in Dresden at the time of my second visit thither, and who was named as *kapell-meister* by the King of Saxony under conditions of almost friendly generosity. In 1840, Herr Wagner was not openly revolutionary; being in composition apparently an imitator of the least amiable peculiarities of Herr Meyerbeer, and showing, it may be apprehended, few signs of that spirit, which, in later times—those of the German riots of 1848—sent him out upon a barricade with the purpose of discrowning the

very King whose bread he had been eating.* " Rienzi" was pronounced to be dull, overcharged, and very long. It was endured as a work belonging to Dresden, as other operatic pieces of dullness in other German capitals have been, but, I believe, followed the common lot of local successes, and never travelled far beyond the barriers of the Saxon capital.

It would seem as if the favour with which this " Rienzi" was received, and the position in which its composer was placed, ripened to fever heat that desire to distinguish himself in progress by destruction, which passes for a generous ambition with persons imperfectly organized or crookedly cultivated. But earlier

* In justification of the censure conveyed in the above phrase, the English reader must be reminded that many of the musical appointments about German theatres are direct court appointments; and that unhappily for both the aristocratic and the popular side of the question, the courts of Germany do not yet represent the people. The *maestro* was presented by the King to his people of Dresden rather than forced by the people of Dresden upon their King. " But Wagner meant well," said an earnest and thorough-going defender of the composer with whom I was discussing the baseness and disloyalty (in the large sense) of his political courses; " he meant well, I assure you. He was really very fond of his King. He would have made him President of the Republic!"

than this, a prophet, an innovator, a celebrity, Herr Wagner had resolved to be; and—weak in musical gifts—he appears to have entered on his quest of greatness by a profound contempt of all other musical celebrities. The confessions which he has recently published, reveal an amount of arrogant and irritable disdain for all opera composers save himself, happily rare in the annals of artistic self-assertion.—His point of departure was to be the union of poetry and music. Operas were to be made of an exquisite completeness, in which both arts were to find the very fullest expression; and since *librettists*, however ingenious, are not always the best of poets, Herr Wagner (wisely enough) resolved to be his own *librettist*.

In this capacity he has proved himself to be strong and felicitous as an inventor, though less excellent as a lyrist, than his self-commendation would have us believe. The wild sea-tale of "The Flying Dutchman" was a happy choice for his second opera, in one desiring to please by legendary interest, grown weary of grand historical pictures in which there is no history; or of comic intrigues of "cloak and sword," in

which there is more intrigue than comedy, and more "cloak and sword" (or costume) than either!—This second opera was completed,—words and music,—while Herr Wagner was resident in Paris; and was offered by him to the managers of the *Grand Opera* there.—They were wise:—recognized the strange, supernatural capability of the drama, but were repelled by the extravagance and crudity of the music. Accordingly they rejected the score, and purchased the poem.—They were less wise, however, in entrusting the latter to be set by their worthy chorus-master, M. Dietsch, since he succeeded in producing music less acceptable than even the original composition by Herr Wagner might have been—and thus killed the story.

Herr Wagner's "Fliegende Holländer" was produced complete at Dresden; and there, in spite of direct royal patronage, in spite of a certain novelty of style, in spite of the acceptance of "Rienzi," and the vogue brought to every theatre by fitting up a genius of its own, the opera, I am assured, failed on its representation. Such immediate failure we know to be no criterion of ultimate success, or intrinsic merit; but it seems to me explained, since I have perused

the music. A spinning song and chorus is to be remembered as pleasing, characteristic; a wild sea-tune, too, as being audaciously broken in rhythm, and built on a phrase of the most desperate platitude; but the rest of the work produced on me merely an impression of grim violence and dreary vagueness, which, till then at least, had never been produced in such a fullness of ugliness by the music of a clever man.

Next in order came Herr Wagner's "Tannhaüser." This opera was given for the first time at Dresden in the year 1845, with Madame Schröder Devrient, Mademoiselle Wagner, and Herr Tichatschek in the principal characters; and at Dresden excited the highest temporary enthusiasm on its production. Though the rapture was, at that period, communicated to no other German theatre, considering the events which have followed the rehabilitation of the opera by Dr. Liszt at Weimar,—it is a work to be spoken of in some detail, as the latest appearance in composition previous to 1848, that may make some figure in the annals of German opera.

The *libretto* is more than ordinarily picturesque—in cast of incident, contrast of character, and charm of situation: well chosen, too,

for Germany, as possessing something of that inner meaning which has given the stories of "Don Juan" and of "Faust" so strong a hold on the national heart. Tieck had already treated the myth of the Pagan goddess *Venus*, dwelling, as a temptress, in the heart of the Thuringian hills, and luring Christian knights to their earthly ruin and eternal damnation, in his tale of "The Runenberg."* There are few legends which exercise a deeper and more troubling fascination.— The drama opens in the hill-cavern of the demon enchantress. There, suffused with a roseate light, may be seen the Mœnads, the Bacchanals, the Syrens of old mythology, weaving their voluptuous choral dances round the enthralled knight and his terrible paramour—

* The reader who cares to follow the subject a step further will find some information gracefully collected by Mr. Monckton Milnes, as a prelude to two ballad-poems, in his "Poems Legendary and Historical" (1844). A foot note there reminds us that opera had already been dealing with the legends of *Dame Venus*, before Herr Wagner cast his eye upon them. The ring placed in mockery on the finger of the statue in "Zampa," which gives occasion to so dramatic a *finale*, also originally belonged to the Pagan *Armida*; and the legend in which it figures, had been, many years before, done into a ballad (I think) by Mr. M. G. Lewis.

terrible, because she cannot give him complete felicity. The spirit of the fine lines—

> "Whilst in her arms at Capua he lay,
> The world fell mouldering from his hand each hour"—

stirs the minstrel-warrior beyond the power of the warmest enjoyment, or the smoothest blandishment to appease. He must be up and doing. He *must* have active, passionate, painful life again: he must return to the earth to which he belongs—to pains better than the bliss of a faëry land, whose sweetness is hell. In vain the temptress tries to retain him—first, by new sorceries for the senses; then, by taunts which remind him that for earth and heaven he is already accursed, by once having entered her bower! Even this taunt (by popular faith accepted as a truth) only steels the courageous man to further resistance. He defies the power of the Goddess; he denies her threats; and, calling on the name of Mary Mother, breaks in an instant the fearful spell.—He is alone on earth, among the Thuringian hills, in the early morning:—alone and accursed; remembering, now his delirium has passed, that the fearful sentence urged on him by the fiend-goddess is true.—On one side of the stage comes a herd-boy singing

on the rock ; on the other, a company of pilgrims slowly winds its way downward from a neighbouring monastery, chanting a hymn as they set their faces towards Rome.—He will go with them: perhaps, through much suffering and penitence, the brand for having commerced with the Pagan goddess of sensual pleasure may be wrung out of his heart.

But the *Tannhaüser* is not permitted yet to fulfil his humble purpose. The *Landgrave* of Thuringia and his hunting train, with knights, pages, and *minnesingers*, are also out on the hill that morning. They recognise in him a lost court-ornament and comrade with joyful surprise. They will have him return with them to the world of tournaments, and songs, and fair women. A brother *minnesinger*, *Wolfram of Eschenbach*, urges the truant more warmly than the rest; telling him how the daughter of the *Landgrave*, the *Princess Elizabeth*, has of late grown melancholy, and has withdrawn from every festival, like one pining with some secret care. This noble *Wolfram* has long followed her with unrequited love; but, like a true lover of the days of chivalry, he would see the wounded heart of his lady healed—though by a rival. His appeals the *Tannhaüser* cannot

resist. The Knight will return to his old life—the life of earthly love, and song, and blessedness.—The pilgrims pass on their way to Rome without the penitent; and he hastens to the lady who has been so long waiting for the truant.

They meet; and the innocent *Elizabeth*, tormented by no suspicions of her knight, and easily appeased by his vague excuses for his long and strange absence, again joins the world, and throws the palace open to feast and to song in honour of the *Master-Singer's* return. — There is a solemn festival of minstrels in the presence of a large and noble company. The theme, for which the prize of song is to be given, is Love; and this the minstrels sing in their turns—each one after his own fashion; but each one answered and rebuked by *Tannhaüser*—the heart of the *Princess* hanging on every word that he utters, on every string of his harp!—The rival *minnesingers* become angered by his triumphant domination and superiority in the art of song. Bitter words are exchanged; swords are drawn; sarcasm follows sarcasm, till the *Tannhaüser*, half-delirious with passion and excitement, turns madly round on his comrades, and tells them that they know not what love is—that none can know

it, in all its height and depth, its delicious sweetness and its burning desires, who have not paid homage at its altar, in the magic palace of *Venus*. No sooner has the truth burst from his lips like fire—the truth which proclaims him to be accursed and outcast from Christian fellowship—than the whole assembly is in uproar. They will fall on the idolater, and slay him. But there is a love stronger than that of the Pagan temptress. The very maiden, to whom his avowal reveals her past desolation and her future doom, stands betwixt him and the indignation of the horror-stricken knights. Their swords shall only reach him through her bosom. She will rescue him that he may have time to repent. There is still hope: there may be still grace. And driven forth in opprobrium, and laden by her gentle love with a remorse yet more terrible to bear, the *Tannhaüser* totters forth from among his old brothers in arms and in song, to follow the pilgrim band—to seek him who can bind and loose—if so be that the eternal punishment of his sin may be remitted by years of mortal repentance and suffering.

The winter comes; and we are again on the hill beneath the monastery, and with the Cross

in sight before which the *Tannhaüser* was found kneeling when the court of *Dame Venus* had vanished. There now kneels another afflicted one, holier than he. The *Princess* will there await the return of the pilgrims from Rome. Her redeemed one may be among their number. Alas! they come at last, and wind their upward way, chanting slowly the old hymn of pilgrimage; and he is not among them.—But the true and holy maiden will still wrestle with despair for his sake; and she prays, with faith and passion, to be allowed to offer up her life to its Giver—if only the vengeance may pass away from *him!*

The prayer has hardly died away—the Lady has hardly retreated, when the lost pilgrim arrives; haggard, maddened, aged, reckless with the excess of his misery. He is a second time confronted on the old spot by *Wolfram*, who asks for tidings of his pilgrimage to Rome; to which *Tannhaüser* replies, with a fiendish earnestness, by demanding, in turn, the way to the lost cave of *Dame Venus*, for thither will he go, and there, if he may for awhile, drown the consciousness of his anguish and the memory of the curse laid on him.—For the Holy Father had assured him that neither fasting, nor tears, nor

prayers, nor meditation, could redeem the soul of any man who had once tarried within those demon precincts. "Till the Holy Cross shall break forth into leafage," was the awful sentence, "such an one can have no salvation." So, thrust out by Heaven, the outcast will seek his fit comrades, and calls on them wildly to receive him again. In vain does *Wolfram* try to hold back his wretched companion. *Dame Venus* has heard her slave, and is willing to reply — again the vision of her glory begins to open—and afar are heard the siren songs and the impassioned dances, and her own voice, bidding the truant "hither" through the rosy mist. The *Tannhaüser*, now frantic betwixt agony and desire, breaks from the friendly arms which strive to detain him, and rushes towards perdition. One step more and he will be there;—but *Wolfram* calls on the name of *Elizabeth*;—and the spell breaks, and the sensual rout vanishes, and the magic cavern disappears; and the two are again on the haunted hill alone.—As before, the *Tannhaüser* is arrested by the pilgrim hymn, this time following a corpse to its rest. While the bearers extinguish their torches, the bier of *Elizabeth* is set down. A part of her prayer

has already been heard. The angels have taken her home: and, behold, a sign that the rest is granted! For the crucifix breaks forth into green leaves; and, saved from the snares of infernal love, by earthly love made complete in Heaven, the heart-broken, exhausted penitent, sinks down beside the bier of the sainted maiden, and dies—atoned for, assoiled, reconciled, and accepted.

Meagre as is the above sketch, it will be seen from it that "Tannhaüser" has no common opera book; and that with such a theme, a picture of romantic and elevated beauty might have been wrought by a hand worthy to treat it. If ever subject was musical this is—simple, suggestive, rich in colour, rich in contrast, rich in poetry.—But how am I to speak of the manner in which the musician has set his own drama? I shall hardly be able to represent my impressions without appearing to those, who have not suffered under this extraordinary opera, in the light of one indulging in hyperbole and caricature; for, in truth, I have never been so blanked, pained, wearied,* *insulted* even (the word is not

* It is fair to state, that though Herr Wagner, by the production of the opera in question, had taken his place as one of the

too strong), by a work of pretension as by this same "Tannhaüser." I could not have conceived it possible that any clever person could deliberately produce what seems to me so false, paradoxical, and at such fierce variance with true artistic feeling, on system, before I sat through the opera, and read the "Hallelujah" vented by its maker in homage to his new revelations, which he has been tempted by his own vanity and by the injudicious praise of others, to put forth.

The first general idea derived from Herr Wagner's music to this romantic story, was its entire discordance with its subject. For how could be imagined tale which gave wider scope for melody?—melody sacred in the pilgrims' canticle—melody voluptuous in the court of *Dame Venus*—melody chivalresque in the minstrel contest. In accordance with this spirit a large part of the *libretto* is written in tolerable

composers of young Germany, some years before the Revolution of 1848 (his "Tannhaüser" thus legitimately coming within the range of this work)—my own acquaintance with its music on the stage is of more recent date. Hence, I have not been called upon to mitigate my impressions under the idea which should never be lost sight of, that distance may lend exasperation to the temper, as well as enchantment to the view.—1853.

rhymed verse. Yet it may be asserted, that no opera existed before "Tannhaüser,"—since the cradle-days of Opera—so totally barren of rhythmical melody; the two subjects on which the overture is based being absolutely the only two *motivi* deserving the name from beginning to end of the drama. Now, wherefore (on system or no system), if the pilgrims were allowed a tune, the minstrels were to be denied one, it would puzzle Herr Wagner to tell. What is more noticeable, one of the two said melodies, the pilgrims' hymn, is as utterly clear of the character of a canticle as the *notturno* in Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream" music, being a tuneable and graceful strain, but in no respect, either as regards intrinsic character or established form, religious. It would seem as if chance had determined the proceedings of a musician more poor in melodic inspiration than any predecessor or contemporary; that when a tune had presented itself, he used it without caring for its fitness—that when tunes would not come, he forced his way along by a recitative as uncouth and tasteless as it is ambitious,—and as if his system had come upon him as an after-thought, by way of apology for him-

self, and depreciation of his betters.—To return, —in the magic cave, so harsh, shrill, crackling, and grotesque are the sounds of chorus and dance which surround *Dame Venus*, as to spirit up associations anything rather than voluptuous or fascinating—strange whimsies of skeleton dances in the air, with their distant (but not dulcet) sound of lean bones rattling.—Then the minstrel contest, instead of its offering a flow of song, growing deeper, wider, more musical, and more impassioned, as enthusiasm kindles enthusiasm in the strife, is but a heavy preachment of several men, set to meagre and formless harp accompaniment. A wearisome straining after literal, verbal expression in music (which, however plausible, is utterly false as a principle if it is perpetually employed) is maintained throughout this work, till the ear no longer retains the power of being moved; and by the time that the great scene of the third act was reached—that in which *Tannhaüser* narrates his pilgrimage to Rome to his brethren in song—my attention, wearied by unfulfilled expectation, and abused by one discordant scene after another, refused any longer to follow a work in which every sensation of pleasure, and every principle

of beauty, were so ceaselessly outraged. I remember the howling, whining, bawling of Herr Tichatschek (to sing, or vocally to declaim this scene is impossible) accom anied with and disturbed by an orchestra, infuriate where it was not confused, but all idea of art or poetical sensation is gone. What the new thing may be which Herr Wagner has put in its place, let others dispute and decide—it has, at all events, no affinity with that which the masters of the musical stage have done before him.

But allowing this opera to be accepted as a symphony,* accompanied by scenery, bearing part in a drama intoned rather than sung, I cannotfin its symphonic or orchestral portion much more admirable than the wild and over-wrought recitative, which it is to check, support, and alter-

* Thus must Herr Wagner's operas be accepted, if the composer's thought and purpose are to be met sympathetically, and if his choir of admirers are to be believed. I was speaking to one of them of the utter ruin which must overtake vocal art, if composers followed in the wake of their idol, and, for the sake of the orchestra, like him utterly debased and barbarized the *cantilena* under pretext of truth in declamation. "In six years more," said I, "if this system be accepted, you will not have an artist left capable of singing an air by Handel or Mozart." "Well, what matter," was the quiet answer; "there has been enough of singing."

nate. "Fidelio" may, in some respect, be called a symphonic opera also, inasmuch as there, too, the instrumental part is more interesting than the vocal portion of the work; but who that knows "Fidelio" does not know it by the wonderful variety and spirit of Beethoven's orchestral devices? Or, to take a newer instance, on a first hearing of Herr Meyerbeer's operas, the ear, if it can receive nothing else, is cognizant of new and peculiar sonorities. I remember, as if it was only yesterday, the delicious impression first produced on me in 1836, by the scoring of the first and second acts of "Les Huguenots;" in such scenes as the one where *Raoul* is among the gallants peeping through the window at *Valentine;* or, in the interlude of the second act preluding the grand *aria* of *Marguerite de Valois*. No such felicities did my ears derive from "Tannhäuser." To me the instrumentation of that opera is singularly unpleasant—as too preposterous to be overlooked, too untrue to its own conditions to be accepted as a charming monster after its kind. From the pianoforte arrangement of the overture (in which, as I have said, the only two *motivi* deserving the name have been wrought), I had expected

striking effects of *crescendo*, *brio*, and, if a noisy orchestra, a rich one also.—The reverse is my impression. The sound is strident, ill-balanced, and wanting body. An awkward treatment of what may be called the tenor part of his band, leaves Herr Wagner often with only a heavy bass to support a squeaking treble poised high aloft. He seems to be fond of dividing his violins, as Weber and Mendelssohn did before him; but neither of these masters of the orchestra considered that by such division alone richness of tone was ensured. Such a full, brilliant, well nourished sound (to adopt the French phrase), as we find in Mendelssohn's *tenor* orchestra, even when his theme was the wildest—as in his "Hebriden" overture, his "A minor symphony," his "Walpurgis Chorus"—is no where managed by Herr Wagner. There is a brilliant violin figure at the close of the "Tannhaüser" overture,—more than once used by Cherubini,—which was intended to work up the composition with amazing fire. This, however, is so stifled by the disproportioned weight of the brass instruments that deliver the pilgrim tune in contrary *tempo*, as merely to produce that impression of strain which

accompanies zeal without result—how different from the brilliancy which Cherubini and Weber could get in similar situations, by means of one half the difficulty, when they tried for a like effect! Throughout the opera, in short, beyond a whimsical distribution of instruments, such as a group of flutes above the tenor voice,* or some lean stringed sound to harass, not support the bass,—I recollect nothing either effective or agreeable—but grim noise, or shrill noise, and abundance of what a wit with so happy a disrespect designated "broken crockery" effects—things easy enough to be produced by those whose audacity is equal to their eccentricity.

Of the fate of "Tannhaüser," at Dresden, on its first production, I have already spoken. It was not till the Revolution of 1848 came, that Dr.

* Here, again, I am well aware that I may have my own example of Meyerbeer cited against me, if only on account of the octave flute and bassoon in the "Pif, paf!" of "Les Huguenots," which gave occasion to Rossini's sarcastic compliment on that air, as "*musique champetre*." But *baroque* as this combination may be considered, and unquestionably *is*, it rivets itself on the ear as effective also. Herr Wagner's best efforts in "Tannhaüser" are, to me, only *baroque*—the effect is wanting. In the more recent opera by him—"Lohengrin"—there are some brilliant orchestral pages.

Liszt began to interest himself for the composer, and devoted all his generous heart, soul, and spirit (all his ingenuity of enthusiastic paradox, and sophistry of brilliant wit, it must be added), to the production and recommendation of Herr Wagner's music; neither was it, till the composer had made himself a martyr, been brought out of prison (as it were), and defended as such, that Herr Wagner bethought himself of his system; to make room for which, he has modestly vituperated and condemned all former opera writers, as weak creatures who weakly conformed to the modes of the hour in which they wrote.

With the rehabilitation in question, however, and its possible influences on German music, I have happily here no concern, still less with Herr Wagner's self-glorification and destruction of old idols. But though I am exempted, by the nature of my task, from examining the old pretexts which in the case of Herr Wagner take the form of new paradoxes, a general remark on the subject must still be offered.

The cardinal fault in the new manner of composition (or decomposition) which has produced fruits so little satisfactory, may not solely arise

from Herr Wagner's perversity and poverty in special gifts combined. It may be a necessary consequence of the times we are living in, and of the ferment which is brewing around us. Being progressive, we are also expected to be universal. History must now be as amusing as a romance—romance must be as profound as a history. Poetry must run into the loops and knots and ties of didactic prose; prose must borrow all the garnitures of poetry. We have pictures painted, the subject and scope of which are not to be understood till we have read the book which describes them. We have books written which are not to be endured until they have been informed with a meaning, by aid of "pleasant pictures." So, in Music, the symphony, besides being a good symphony, must now express the anguish of the age, or of some age past. There must be story, inner meaning, mystical significance—intellectual tendency. To what interpretations of Beethoven's quartetts and sonatas have we not been exposed! Then, the opera must be a great poem—picture, drama, and symphony in one.—This extension of desire (not to call it a misuse of imagination) may be lamented, but it cannot be helped. The waters

are out—there is no calling them back. But, for the present, unless creative invention should develope itself in some form totally unexpected, such an increased and multiplied variety of requisitions is a hindrance rather than a help to the artist. If one ingredient elude his management, the composite work loses all symmetry, proportion, and power to charm sound taste. It is his comprehension of this difficult truth, and conformity to its conditions, which distinguish M. Meyerbeer, and which will so long maintain his grand operas on the stage. It is some sense of its force, and more unexpressed consciousness of his own incompleteness, which have driven Herr Wagner to the strange lengths of his unmusical proceedings, and which have tempted him, because he is unequal to the strain laid upon him, to break in pieces all the ancient and beloved things which have been worshipped, in place of adding to their number. That his countrymen, for the sake of some unmusical merits in his opera-books, are all, or any of them, willing to stand by and see the special graces of musical drama utterly tumbled into chaos, as so much obsolete rubbish, is a sight suggesting other

considerations—suggestions of a disorganization, if not disease, of artistic taste, which is not cheering. For the present, there seems not much chance of the ferment working itself clear; but it is, perhaps, better for the sake of Music, that it should at once boil, and bubble, and overflow the caldron, than struggle darkly beneath the surface, in a state of morbid compression, as was the case before the year 1848. The open proclamation of anarchy is less to be mistrusted than the discontents and plottings of secret conspiracy.

THE END.

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In preparation,

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

THE

RELIGION AND MORALS OF GENIUS.

A SERIES OF

ESSAYS, WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

WEIMAR AND LEIPSIC.

WEIMAR AND LEIPSIC.

WEIMAR IN 1840.

From Frankfort to Leipsic—Goethe's house—Sonnets in the *Frauen-Platz*—M. Chelard—The analytical spirit of Weimar in Goethe's time unfavourable to a sound judgment of music—Madame Szymanowska—A notice of Hummel—His unconsciousness in composition—Zelter's judgment of him—His improvisation—The home-position of the great musicians of Germany.

WHETHER as regards health, spirits, or musical taste (the latter palled by inanimate repetitions of inferior works, or disappointed by imperfect versions of master compositions), it is hard to imagine a tonic better than the Leipsic Autumn Fair, as it was to be taken in 1839 and 1840.

From Berlin to Leipsic, the journey before railroads were made was singularly insipid, save for Wittemberg: from Frankfort, the road, two nights and a day and a half in length, if travelled

in the *schnell-post*, was more engaging.—First comes the fruit district, which is rich and joyous by reason of its plenty. To this succeeds the country in the Kinsig Thal, which, though not particularly beautiful, has a pastoral character of its own. When the Red Land and the Thuringian Wood are entered, there is some fine forest scenery. About Eisenach the road winds among a succession of hills, clothed with trees, which make a brilliant panorama, when they are seen in their autumnal dress. The towns, too, are most of them worth a day's halt: Fulda, for its ecclesiastical remains; Eisenach, for its clean, picturesque market-place, and its vicinity to the Wartburg—Luther's *Patmos*, where the stains of ink with which the Reformer assaulted The Devil still blot the wall; Gotha, for its Palace; Weimar, for the sake of the brilliant court of intellect and genius which once ruled Germany thence.—At the last I availed myself of an hour's halt on my journey in 1840, to go and stand before the house where Goethe dwelt. The house is but like any other German house, and the fountain before it, a small, paltry fountain—yet both stand out distinct in my memory, from a circumstance, in itself trifling, associated with them. The

Frauen-Platz, a little irregular space, was empty even of loitering children: the noon was warm and sunshiny. In one of the upper windows, from which the poet had looked out, I caught the profile of the colossal helmeted head of the Goddess of Wisdom; in another, half-opened, behind its muslin curtain stood an exquisite nosegay of brilliant autumn flowers. One would not have remarked these things elsewhere; but seen in a Goethe's house they were sufficient to set the fancy in motion.

Where mighty ones have been, O, ne'er erase
One touch, one print, one memory! Ev'n the weed
That clings around the threshold-posts would speed
The enthusiast's rapture, could he only trace
That e'er the Master, lingering by that place,
Vouchsafed its wan and worthless bloom to heed.
And thus 'twas precious, when I stood to read
The words o'er Goethe's door, to meet the face
Of high Minerva smiling gravely bland;
The Goddess there—her priest and follower gone!
And when I marked how some benignant hand
Had gathered flowers, and placed them in the sun,
It pleased my fancy well, that wreath so fair
Should deck the silent shrine whose Angel still is there!

I may be allowed, perhaps, to add an after thought, which arose many years later, within the house of Goethe, on examining his collections,

which are now open to the public. The small value of these to the general connoisseur, struck me forcibly, as a testimony to his power of knowledge and imagination, which could make so much of so little.

These have been treasures to a mighty mind,
Though pale and meagre seems their full display;
On this, the Nature-worshipper would pray,
This, like a spell, the pinions did unbind
On which the pilgrim, ruler of the wind,
Rose toward the fountains of eternal day;
This chanted in his ear some Orphic lay,
From temples where the olden gods were shrined.
Meagre and pale—ah! but to those who look
Through eye without a mind: not such was he,
Nor craved for gilded letters in the book,
Ere he could find therein its poesy.
With royal hand of bounty, large and free,
He gave a talent forth for every grain he took.

When I passed through Weimar in 1840, the town was musically stagnant. M. Chelard was acting *kapellmeister* there; but appeared to be exercising his functions in an atmosphere of discouragement and indifference. This seemed hard and strange to one who had long believed Germany to be a paradise of sympathy and satisfaction to serious musicians. And I had not forgotten that we English owe a particular debt of

gratitude to M. Chelard; since it was by him, in 1832, that we were made acquainted with "Fidelio," and by him, in his capacity of conductor to the German opera, that we were shown what discipline can effect with executive materials in no respect remarkable. The skill and effectiveness, too, of certain portions of M. Chelard's own opera "Macbeth," should save his name from being forgotten, and should have secured him "a fair construction" in his own town.

But the memory of a more renowned artist made Weimar interesting in 1840.—I allude to Hummel, who had been *kapellmeister* at Weimar during the period which makes so brilliant a figure in the annals of Germany. He, too, seems to have been somewhat neglected. Honest, rough, and kind-hearted—in his youth scantily educated and severely coerced—he was totally unable to analyze his art in general, or to maintain his own special part in it, with that minuteness of observation or rhetorical grace of utterance in which the accomplished circle of Weimar connoisseurs loved to indulge. It is even on record, that his compositions merely ranged with himself, as being "difficult," or "not difficult;" and that such a work as his

Sonata in F sharp minor, fine and impassioned as regards idea and the scope given to executive mastery combined—owed its origin to a commission from a publisher for something "extremely hard." Such might be all that Hummel had to communicate on the matter, without his meriting the reproach of "inspired idiocy," or being credited with merely that mechanical readiness which knows not what it is doing. Mozart, it will be recollected, totally and (for him) seriously, declined to criticise himself, and confess his habits of composition. Many men have produced great works of art who have never cultivated æsthetic conversation: nay, more, who have shrunk with a secretly entertained dislike from those indefatigable persons whose fancy it is "to peep and botanize" in every corner of faëry land.—It cannot be said that the analytical spirit of the circle of Weimar, when Goethe was its master-spirit, did any great things for Music. That which was second-rate sometimes found championship there; time was wasted over intellectual exercitation, which would have been more genially devoted to enjoyment and emotion, without tabulating the delight, or anatomizing the pleasure. Not seldom that which was merely

sensual carried off the honours. For observe what Goethe wrote to Zelter regarding Madame Szymanowska, a Polish *pianiste*, whose name will only live because of Goethe's eulogy. "She may well," says Goethe, "be compared to our Hummel, only that she is a beautiful Polish woman. When Hummel ceases playing, a gnome seems to remain, who, with the existence of mighty demons, produced the wonders for which you scarcely ventured to thank him; but when *she* has finished, and comes and turns her beautiful eyes upon you, you do not know whether you ought not to congratulate yourself upon the change." It is true that Zelter, more directly musical, and less sentimentally under the spell of Madame Szymanowska's eyes than his friend, wrote of Hummel as a pianist something more cordially. "To me," says Zelter, "Hummel is a summary of the pianoforte playing of our time; for he unites, with much meaning and skill, what is genuine and what is new. You are not aware either of fingers or strings: you have *music*. Everything comes out as sure, and with as much ease as possible, however great the difficulty. He is like a vessel of the worst material, full of *Pandora's* treasures."

The above is a solid, if not a very genial, tribute to Hummel the pianist; but I must think, that from philosophers so far-sighted, and from musicians so catholic, he still might have claimed fairer construction and kinder allowance. Though he had not beautiful Polish eyes, he was still a notable composer; though he was "like a vessel of the worst material," he had more than the mere *Pandora's* gift of interpretation: he commanded the individual force, fire —most of all, fancy—of a poet capable of extempore utterance.

By none who have heard Hummel's improvisation can it ever be forgotten. It was graceful, spontaneous, fantastic. The admirable self-control of his style as a player (displayed in a measurement and management of *tempo* unequalled by any contemporary or successor that I have heard), so far from leading him to hamper his fancy or humour, enabled him to give both the fullest scope—inasmuch as he felt sure that he could never ramble away into a chaos, under pretext of a flight across Dream-land. The subjects he originated in improvisation were the freshest, brightest, most various conceivable: his treatment of them could be either strict or

freakish, as the moment pleased;—or he would take the commonest tune, and so grace, and enhance, and alter it, as to present it in the liveliest forms of a new pleasure. I remember once to have heard Hummel thus treat the popular airs in Auber's "Massaniello:"—for an hour and a half, throwing off a Neapolitan *fantasia* with a felicity in which his unimpeachable beauty of tone and execution were animated by the bright spirit of the south, as he wrought together the Chapel Hymn, and the Fisherman's Chorus, and the *Tarantella*, and *Massaniello's* air by the side of the sleeping *Fenella*. It is well known that the gift of musical improvisation can be cultivated, so far as readiness, order, and even climax, are concerned;—that the fancy, too, can be set free by exercise; but it is hard to conceive, that he who was the most various and the most masterly of modern *improvisatori*, should have been a mere machine into which so much learning had been crammed; and thus it is with regret that I have always fancied him undervalued and disparaged among those very persons of taste and philosophy whose boast it was to penetrate through forms and incrustations to the innermost heart of Nature.

Be Hummel's value greater or less, those who recollect the high pretensions made by Goethe's Weimar, will perhaps feel (as I did) pain and surprise on learning, that, during the great old days of that capital, the general treatment of the German musical artist bore no proportion to the encouragement extended to the painter, the poet, or even to the passing English stranger. When Hummel was almost a patriarch in his art, on the evenings of his performance at Court, he was allowed to remain in a mean, comfortless ante-room, till the moment for his *exhibition* arrived: this unworthy usage being broken through by the spirit of a younger artist, who, on being treated in a similar despotic fashion (after receiving a direct and courteous invitation as a private individual, and, what was more, as the household guest of Goethe), walked quietly home out of the *Residenz*, to the great discomfiture of a circle expressly convened to profit by the talent so coarsely and coldly welcomed. This I was told by Mendelssohn, in 1840, as we drove through the gate at Weimar. Long before that time, however, the tone of the town had changed, and the musician was honourably

received at the Court as an honoured guest, among other men of imagination.

The anecdote is curious in another point of view,—as illustrating what has been too little understood in England; namely, the home-position of the great musicians of Germany. Their life of life-appointments has been so often and again represented as the *beau ideal* of artistic desire and opportunity, that when some idea of what now seems to be its true nature began to break upon me, I leaned from conviction, fancying the darkness to be in my own eyes—the canker to lie in my own sophisticated English habits of thinking—and not in a social arrangement, which hardly suits modern times, modern desires, or modern progress.

Let us consider it for a moment.—A man must be of the first strength to resist the influences of a routine existence, passed among those with whom simplicity of habits does not mean an exemption from class-distinctions and class-prejudices, or the discouragement of a censorious and gossiping spirit. While, as the servant of a court,—which is not always composed of such gracious and cultivated personages as a Princess Amelia of Saxony, or the families that now preside over Saxe Weimar,—the Artist must minister to every mode,

no matter how corrupt—to every caprice, no matter how inane—in his closet, the creative thinker is tempted into an opinionated self-contentment from the moment that he knows his fortune to be secure, and his position ascertained, let him please or wrong the public ever so much.—If he be admired, he runs a danger of being puffed up; if he be misunderstood, he is pretty sure to be led into bickerings with his audience, in place of considering how he can conciliate them.

Chance has indulged me with some opportunities of observation; and I can hardly cite one instance of a great creative musician holding a life-appointment in a small town, who has not been either the worse for it, as regards his art, or else who has not enjoyed his competence with such a per-centage of soreness, sense of injustice, and jealousy, as make one sigh for "the dinner of herbs and peace therewith"—for the stroller's cart, or the gipsy's tent—as better than the luxuries of a life passed in an atmosphere of such irritability. There is a more Beotian class of recipients, who, sinking stolidly down into the beer-glass and the tobacco-box, lose whatever brightness or enterprise they were forced to cultivate, so long as they were compelled to

struggle with life; but on persons like these, speculation is thrown away. With them, maturity must imply deterioration, let them get their years over in a crowd or in a wilderness; and the beer and the tobacco are, accordingly, perhaps, the best things which can befall them.

Let it be remembered, that these remarks are not applied to times elder and less civilized than to the thirty recent years of peace, during the earlier portion of which, some of the most promising young composers of Germany got placed — at Hanover, Stuttgart, Munich, Dresden, and elsewhere. I am thinking of what these have done for the world's music. I am counting up more than one glimpse — more than one revelation—more than one unworthy petty newspaper controversy — more than one discreditable instance of ingratitude— more than one melancholy spectacle of worthies in the decline of life, wandering about the world in search of new homes by way of escaping from *tedium vitæ*, neglect, or direct persecution.—For, again, as to position and fortune, a life-appointment by no means offers the final shelter of a faëry land. There may happen such things to the old musician, as the coming of a "new King

who knew not *Joseph*," and who has his own æsthetic notions, his own favourites to provide for—or else his own plan of saving on his chapel that he may spend on his stud. We have seen such humiliating sights as Electors wrangling with men old in years and honours, about a few *thalers* in excess or arrear of their salaries, or about a few days of holiday—as the *kapell-meister* not speaking to the *concert meister* because of some mistake brewed betwixt them by the *theatre-director* in the hopes of exciting His Most Serene Highness the Grand Duke of *Hohen — something or other*, to the dismissal of which ever combatant the *theatre-director* hates. — I do not think that the German habitually dislikes these pleadings and polemics as much as an Englishman does. His life of garden saunterings and coffee-houses, and stout suppers at Mine Host's table, disposes him towards gossip, to a degree which we should consider old-womanish. But, even allowing for this extra toleration, this proclivity towards explanations, intrigues, questions of precedence, and hearkenings out for ill-report, as national—I am satisfied that the general history of modern life-appointments would prove them a failure, both as

regards the developing of a talent which is to speak to all the world, and the securing for those enjoying them an old age unworn by envy, hatred, and other dark solicitudes.

The executive artist, who can go out from time to time, and sun his sympathies in other concert-halls and gardens than those of his own town, may run less danger in one respect—but, on another side, his peril is greater.—That is a cruel time for him, in any event, when the carefully exercised fingers begin to lag and tremble; when the sedulously preserved voice begins to lose tone and compass; when no cosmetics can fill up the caverns on the cheek, or hide the wrinkles on the brow; and doubly cruel it is, if the pleasure-giver sinks into the pensioner who must be endured, and who is exposed to depreciating comparison with every new comer exhibiting a fresher finger-trick,—or whose voice is four-and-twenty instead of four-and-fifty years old. What can be worse than to have nothing left save eagerness to display to a set of neighbours who know the very number of hairs on his head, and to professional rivals who yawn at the very efforts which should move their sympathy? What can be more dispiriting than the sight of

a crew of younger men waiting for his succession?—what more tormenting than supersensitiveness vexed with such suggestions as occurred to the veteran in Browning's "Sordello:"—

> "God help me! for I catch
> My children's greedy sparkling eyes at watch.
> 'He bears that double breastplate on,' they say,
> 'So many minutes less than yesterday.'"

It is a question, whether in any country save England, it is safe for an artist to exercise his art in the place where he has passed his prime.—We have the spirit of loyalty to our public favourites strong within us—too strong, sometimes, to be consistent with a profitable progress in judgment. The gray hairs of those who have grown gray in our service are respected by us—in part from our superior constancy of character—in part from our independence—because they are *not* imposed on us as necessary appendages to Church and State. Such has not been the case in Germany.

LEIPSIC IN 1839-40.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONCERTS.

The Leipsic Fair—The town—The figures of the Fair—Opera at Leipsic—Herr David—A note on musical hospitalities—The concerts at the *Gewand-haus*—The liberality of their *programmes*—The execution—Crowded audiences—Suppers after the concerts.

Be the pilgrim musician or amateur, gentle or simple, humourist or journalist or novelist,—let no one within a hundred miles of the place miss the Leipsic Fair. The town in itself has a quaint, cheerful, and friendly appearance. Within the walls, high richly-decorated houses and old churches seem almost toppling over each other, so thickly are they set. Without, where the ramparts were, is an irregular pleasure-ground, spreading out in some places to such a respectable amplitude as to secure privacy

for the walker. Beyond this belt is another ring, made up of houses, some of them set in gardens, richly dressed and full of flowers; the prettiest, most inviting residences which kind hearts and distinguished musicians could find. There in 1839 and 1840 I found that cheerful, simple, unselfish, and intelligent artistic life which many have been used to imagine as universally German. Leipsic has no court to stiffen its social circles into formality, or to hinder its presiding spirits from taking free way: on the other hand, it possesses a University to stir its intelligences, a press busy and enterprising, and a recurrence of those gatherings which bring a representative of every class of society in Europe together. These last can hardly pass over—be they for mere money-getting, be they for mere merry-making—without disturbing the settlement of that stagnant and pedantic egotism into which the strongest of minds are apt to sink when the wheel of life moves too slowly, or the circle of cares is too narrow.

To be sure, the first moments of my arrival at Leipsic in 1839 were unpropitious enough. I had come from Berlin without stopping. It

was a lowering, showery afternoon; and, finding it impossible to gain any hotel accommodation, I was transferred by the landlord of the *Hôtel de Bavière* to a lodging, four stories high, close in his neighbourhood. The common staircase which led to my nest was dark and ruinous, and of course an inch thick with dirt, since every room in every story of the house was occupied by its own trader or traders. The floor of my chamber, too, when I reached it, was under water; and an old skinny bare-legged *Sycorax* was paddling about in slippers, on pretence of making every thing clean, as she paddled about whooping to an old man as miserable-looking as herself, and, moreover, imbued thoroughly with tobacco. There was no remaining to witness the issue of these operations; so, having deposited my baggage high and dry above the reach of the flood, taking it for granted that somehow or other the place would be made habitable before bed-time (*box*-time one ought to call it in Germany), I strolled out to search for a dinner, and to study the humours of the Fair.

I do not remember to have been ever more thoroughly amused than during that walk. I

was arrested at every step by the high buildings, with wares of every conceivable quality streaming out of every window, from garret to cellar:—food for the mind in books,—pleasure for the eye in prints, Nuremberg toys, and that many-coloured Bohemian glass which makes the booths where it is exhibited glitter like *Aladdin's* palace;—clothing for the body, in the shape of furs, woollen goods, knitted garments of form and use totally unintelligible to English eyes, and magnificent lengths of glaring calico which "the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling" may accept, if he be willing, for pageant banners when Day begins to close in.—Then the vendors! Here were peasantesses, presiding over their homely wares, in enormous winged caps, with long streamers, or tight forehead-bands of black lace, wearing every variety of tunic, Joseph, petticoat, polonaise, and Hessian boot. There was a man—Heaven knows whence!—from head to heel of the colour of mud, with a huge hat, like an over-ripe mushroom in shape, not half covering his long, unkempt hair,—who stopped and pressed every one to buy his mousetraps, in a deep melancholy voice that at once put to flight all the notions of *brigandage*

and blackguardism which a first glance excited. Close behind, a couple of Jews, in their glossy camlet gaberdines and high-furred caps, made excellent painters' figures: one of the pair with a long yellow beard, so glossy, and crisp, and curling, as to form a wonderful feature in a picture, however ill it assorted with the keen small eyes and the hooked physiognomy belonging to "the tribes;" while the chin of his companion, who was pale as a ghost and spectrally thin, was garnished—it might have been for contrast's sake—with a luxury of black hair. The next trader, perhaps, was a grave and stately Oriental, in his flowing robes and white turban, sitting patiently behind his stall of pipe *waaren*, or gliding up—the most courteous of merchants—with essenced amulets and necklaces of black clay, hanging in cataracts over the edge of his pedlar's box.—Among the people I most liked to meet in the Fair, were the Tyrolese. One establishment or brotherhood of four great brawny audacious men stands before me as I write, with their steeple hats pranked out with nosegays, and their round jackets, their leather girdles, and their velveteen breeches, displaying clean white stockings on

calves huge enough to set up a score of Irish chairmen;—the most impudent, merriest, best-natured disciples of *Autolycus* that ever went forth to bamboozle or amuse the world of *Dorcases* and *Mopsas*. One of them—some six feet high—had a particular propensity to creep into the hotels at high dinner-tide, and to worm himself into the thickest of the crowd, where the prettiest women were to be found; tempting them, like his archetype, to buy "a tawdry lace and a pair of sweet gloves," with impudent flatteries there was no resisting. All the world knows, ever since the days of the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, how relishing even a dustman's compliment may be! And my friend admired the small wrists and the white hands to such good purpose, that brisk was the trade he drove, and many the pair of rotten gloves and trumpery bracelets he would get rid of, ere discovery of his presence overtook him, and the eager perspiring crowd of *kellners*, enraged at being interrupted in their service, began to abuse him and to order him out. Not a step would he budge, having taken up a good position. More than once, an absolute chase ensued to clear the room, when the varlet, suddenly diving under one of

the tables, presented his waggish face and his box at the other side, in some corner so inaccessible, with such a pertinacious determination to make good his ground, that resistance was in vain, and he was permitted to finish his traffic in triumph. I ought to be rather ashamed to own the acquaintance; but, after one of these *escapades*, whether he had seen encouragement and diversion in my face I know not, my friend the Tyroler never after met me in the street without choosing to stride along by my side for a considerable distance, laughing and chattering like a magpie, and offering to carry for me whatever I might happen to have in my hand.

Nor were such groups as these the only ones which made the Leipsic Fair so amusing to all who love to study character. The strangers and guests were as miscellaneous as the traders. He must indeed be a lonely man, or have lived all his life in the most tarry-at-home circle of his country, who could escape from picking up there some old acquaintance or some new friend. The number of known and unexpected faces which a pilgrim could meet, to be swept away by the next wave of arrivals, was not the least of the attractions of the place and the time, which made me

feel, ere I had been four-and-twenty hours in Leipsic, as if I had been familiar with it all my life! One day it could be the traveller's lot, perhaps, at table to face a pair of the cold, thoroughly-dressed figures whom he had left doing their part in crowding the London season without animating it;—another, his acquaintance, who sixteen years before came to England to learn the language and mercantile business, will turn up;—another, the discoverer, who, when they parted last, was bound for the Andes or the North Pole;—another, the artist, or *artiste*, whom he had at home admired at a distance in concert-room or theatre. If he was a musician, he was sure of interesting encounters at the Fair of Leipsic; since in that town, when I first knew it, resided the heart of Northern Germany's musical vitality.

The theatre of Leipsic, pleasantly set in a little plantation, is within a small and shabby building. In Burney's time, though its performances were under the direction of M. Hiller, the style of singing was denounced by him as coarse and vulgar, inasmuch as the Italian traditions, which had been introduced early in the century, had been forgotten by the vocalists.

A reason somewhat curious, when it is remembered that the aforesaid Hiller was Mara's master; and that she was confessedly at the head of European *cantatrici* as a vocalist! In 1839 it had not much to boast of, save an excessively fresh and pleasing voice in the person of Mademoiselle Schlegel,* the comeliest of comely *blondes*, some seventeen years of age, who, though already ample in person, had not as yet lost that youthful delicacy of appearance which generally passes away sadly soon from the stage-heroines of Germany. Leipsic in 1839 seemed as entirely devoted to French opera as the other towns I visited. While the thin and wearisome "Caramo" of Lortzing put every one to sleep, as it did me, "Les Huguenots" and "Gustave," performed under every disadvantage of *locale*, drew crowded audiences.

I saw the former; and a more curious performance I never witnessed. Owing to the quantity of supernumerary instruments introduced by Herr Meyerbeer into his score, and the limited scale of the orchestral force, the result at Leipsic was, that the wind-instruments almost outnumbered the violins, to the utter destruction

* Now Madame Köster—1852.

of those proportions upon the observance of which Herr Meyerbeer lays so much stress for the due production of his effects. Nevertheless, the whole work, vast and complicated as it is, went without flaw or faltering; and, harsh as the orchestra was compelled to be (the stringed instruments having no other chance of being heard at all), an outline of the whole opera was traced with a coarse fidelity, if I may so express it, which surprised me, and, by the care and intelligence indicated, gave me pleasure. And when I encountered a Parisian critic—by the very notion of so small a body of singers and instrumentalists attempting works so enormous, thrown into fits of disapproval so violent that he would not vouchsafe to witness murder so flagrant;—willing though I was to concede the utter impropriety of the choice of such an opera, I could not but reply that the manner of its performance implied a perfection of leadership I had never fallen in with elsewhere.

And so it did. I had never met then—I have never met since—with any executive head of an orchestra to compare with Herr David. Spirit, delicacy, and consummate intelligence, and that power of communicating his own zeal

to all going along with him, are combined in him in no ordinary measure, and with the crowning charm of that good-will and sympathy which only await citizens as worthy in head and heart (in the very best sense of the epithet), as he is. A sour, or conceited, or irregularly-living man might, it is possible, know his professional duties equally well; but he would never be followed by his townsfolk with such eager and cheerful zeal, if my faith in the connection of Art and Society be founded upon any reality.

I could say more of Herr David's leading, as a thing in my experience entirely unique. I could dwell, too, upon the pleasant life he was then leading in his garden-house, spent in a constant interchange of good offices, musical and social, with his townsmen and strangers,* unbroken by a shade of envy or irritability, or those other petty feelings of cabal and intrigue

* I have never enjoyed the luxury of instrumental chamber music so richly as at Leipsic. One day it took the form of pianoforte-playing of some new MS. trio, or some Beethoven *sonata*; another evening a quartett; sometimes an *adagio* by Bach; sometimes a *Mazurka* or *impromptu* by Chopin: and all this was lavished with such an apparent ease and conformity to daily habit, as to lessen materially the burden of the obligation which, as an insignificant stranger, I should otherwise have felt. I cannot, however, pass a convocation made by Mendelssohn in

which eat the hearts away of so many artists. But it is a cruel thing to load the true-hearted and highly cultivated with the *plaster* of fulsome laudation; and I might not have printed as much

honour of Herr Moscheles (when the latter was passing through Leipsic in 1840), because in its scale and splendour it approached a public performance, while in its friendliness and ease it retained all the charm of "a little music by one's own fireside." The admirable concert orchestra was collected, and performed two of the "Leonora" overtures of Beethoven, and Mendelssohn's own picturesque overture known in England as "The Isles of Fingal," as well as accompanied the distinguished guest in one of his own *concertos*. Besides this, we had one of Mendelssohn's psalms, admirably sung by the amateurs of the place; the "Hommage à Handel" of Herr Moscheles, played by its composer and Mendelssohn; and one of Sebastian Bach's *concertos* for three pianofortes.

I may here, too, recall one of those thousand instances of gracious and lively kindness, which should be laid together against that future day when the Biography of Mendelssohn shall be written. A smart and unexpected attack of illness pinioned me to the sofa during my second visit to Leipsic. This is not a cheerful sort of imprisonment, when the scene is a very narrow room in a crowded German inn, at fair time—when the time is the black weather, and the short days of November. But the fact of my temporary helplessness had hardly been known a couple of hours, when a heavy sound came up the stairs, and at the door of the little close room. "What is there?" said I. "A great piano," was the answer: "and Dr. Mendelssohn is coming directly." And he *did* come directly, with that bright cordial smile of his. "If you like," said he, "we will make some music here to-day, since you must not go out;" and down

as this, could not all that I have journalised be warranted to the full by the most cynical or pre-occupied stranger, amateur or professional, who in those days ever assisted at one of the Leipsic Concerts.

Exclusive of benefit and charitable concerts, the winter series of these entertainments extends to twenty performances. Nowhere in Germany is the *cramming* system of five consecutive hours of music resorted to; and I have seen our monstrous London *programmes* hoarded up and spelt over like curiosities from Nootka Sound or Ceylon; but still, to provide variety for a score of evenings, in the present dearth of compositions of the highest order, requires no ordinary measure of intellectual energy. Yet this was done at Leipsic, in 1839 and 1840, without parade or without charlatanry. The directors of these concerts, a committee of gentlemen,—

he sat, and began to play through a heap of Schubert's pianoforte music, about which I had expressed some curiosity the day before; for hours delighting himself in delighting an obscure stranger, as zealously and cheerfully as if even then his time could not be measured by gold, and as if his company was not eagerly and importunately sought by "the best of the best," who repaired to Leipsic with little purpose except to solicit his acquaintance.—1852.

among whom are not to be forgotten Herr Rochlitz, the patriarch of German critics, and Dr. Härtel,* whose name is historical among all those caring for continental music,—seconding Dr. Mendelssohn, opened their doors liberally to every new instrumental work of promise; taking good care, however, in cases of experiment, to assure the interest of the evening's performance by the repetition of some favourite and well-known production. In the four concerts which I attended during my two first visits to Leipsic—besides two Symphonies by Beethoven, two Symphonies by Mozart, two Overtures by Weber, and one by Spohr—and *Concertos* for the pianoforte, violin, trombone, and flute—I fell in

* I scarcely need remind the musician that Herren Breitkopf and Härtel were among the earliest, and have been always among the most extensive, publishers of the modern classical music of Germany.—In this respect, too, the amount of life and enterprise at Leipsic is wonderful. The orchestral scores, the oratorios, the operas, the theoretical works, &c., &c., &c., which its four presses pour out, must strike with amazement those who are familiar with the flimsy staple of the wares disseminated by the London publishers. Nor did Herren Breitkopf and Härtel, and Kistner, and Hofmeister, and Peters, content themselves with the coarse paper and coarse type which the German *littérateur* was in those days obliged to be satisfied with from his publishers. I have never seen music so splendidly issued as by the second establishment.

with the whole of one act and the overture of M. Chelard's opera, "Die Hermannschlacht," and a grand manuscript concert *cantata* by Herr Marschner, including an overture, songs, and choruses. Neither M. Chelard's nor Herr Marschner's effort was worth the labour bestowed upon it; but the want in London of such catholicity and enterprise as brought this music forward has gone far, by permitting audiences to remain within one unchanging and narrow circle, to destroy more than one of our musical establishments of high renown.* These very trials and hearings of all that rising contemporary talent can do, instead of seducing the love of an audience from its old objects of reverence, should tend, by contrast, to make what is sterling more sterling, and what

* Among other devices employed for giving interest to the programmes of the Leipsic Concerts, I cannot pass over the performance of Beethoven's four overtures to "Fidelio" on the same evening, to afford the curious means of comparison: or the series of three or more historical concerts, in which the effect meditated by Spohr, in his strangely incoherent symphony, was produced by progressive selections of instrumental music, beginning with Bach and Handel. We are still too far from being ripe for such performances as these—too largely apt to treat all public exhibitions as mere aimless amusements, where the most piquant novelty is the one thing best worth pursuing.

is grand, grander; and to send listeners back to the unfading masterpieces of Music with a sharpened relish.—Never, indeed, did I hear the Symphonies of Beethoven so intensely enjoyed as at Leipsic, and never so admirably performed. As regarded those works of the Shakspeare of Music, I felt, for the first time in my life, in 1839, richly and thoroughly satisfied beyond reserve or question.—There was a breadth and freedom in their outlines, a thorough proportion in all their parts, a poetical development of all their choice and picturesque ideas, which fully compensated for the occasional want of the hyper-brilliancy and the hyper-delicacy, on the possession of which my friends in Paris boast themselves so vain-gloriously. It was not hearing Beethoven played,—it was revelling among his noble creations; and with the most perfect security that nothing would interfere to break the spell, or to call you back from the Master's thought to the medium in which it was given forth. Then those small aggravations of emphasis, those slight retardations of time, neither finically careful, nor fatiguingly numerous,—for which imagination thirsts so eagerly, so rarely to be gratified—were all given; and with such ease

and nature, that I felt the gift was no holiday effort, got up for once, but the staple mode of interpretation and execution belonging to the place. Till, indeed, I heard the Leipsic orchestra,—my first love, the Brunswick Festival, not forgotten,—I felt I had no right to say, "Now I am indeed in the musical Germany of which I have so long dreamed."

As regards *habitat*, the subscription concerts at Leipsic are but indifferently provided. The *Gewand-haus*, a moderately-sized room, was, in 1839-40, infinitely too small for the audience who crowded it, paying their sixteen *groschen* (two shillings) for entrance, with no vainglorious notions of exclusiveness nor tip-toe enthusiasm to trouble their brains, but from a sheer thoroughgoing love of the art, and a certainty that they should be gratified. The ladies of the place occupied the centre of the room, sitting in two *vis-à-vis* divisions—that is, sideways to the orchestra. Behind them crowded the gentlemen so thickly, that any one going as late as half an hour before the music struck up, run no small chance of being kneaded into the wall by the particularly substantial proportions of those

before him, whom no good-natured wish to accommodate a stranger can make thin. More than once, by the obliging intervention of a friend at court, I was enabled to take refuge within the rails of the orchestra. This was not the best situation in the world for the whole effect, but it enabled me, almost by participation, to appreciate the untiring vigilance and industry of the performers, and the honest goodwill with which they not only betook themselves to their task, but regarded each other. The orchestra consists of some sixty or seventy performers; precisely the number, so Beethoven's biographers tell us, which the great master conceived to be the best suited to the adequate performance of his Symphonies. The vocal music of these concerts is generally mainly sustained by the presence of some one stranger engaged for the series, and such resident talent as the town affords. In two successive years, two of our countrywomen, Miss Novello and Mrs. A. Shaw, filled the former position with brilliant credit. In 1839, the young Belgian lady, Mademoiselle Meerti (who has since done her part in London in establishing the

claims of her country as one rich in musicians) was the favourite of Leipsic. In 1840, things were less auspiciously ordered; a Mademoiselle Schloss, who had received much training as the resident lady, triumphantly maintaining her ground against Mademoiselle Meerti's successor. The latter, Mademoiselle List, stood upon the ground of her beauty. As regards her singing, I cannot conceive how it could ever have been brought to an end with any orchestra less admirably under conduct; and, after counting five notes in one bar and nine in another, in the vain hope of ascertaining what was the real *tempo* of the movement in which she was engaged, I went home penetrated with admiration at the courtesy of my Leipsic friends in playing out of time when "a lady was in the case."

Very pleasant were those concerts, and very pleasant — though any thing but English — the suppers which sometimes succeeded them, — when parties of nine or a dozen ladies and gentlemen would repair to one of the hotels, to do justice to the good things of its *speise-karte;* and the animated scene of the

dinner was more gaily repeated, from the ladies being in evening-dress. To be sure, I could not help lamenting over the fresh and pretty toilettes that must have gone home, in some cases, saturated with tobacco-smoke; and it was sometimes difficult to hear a word that passed in the midst of the noise of the service of the table—the explosion of champagne corks—and the diapason of a violent and busy band of music, playing Strauss, and Bellini, and Auber with an untiring industry hard to sympathize with when the ears are full with Beethoven and Mozart. Such a Babel of mirth and good-fellowship, such a mingling of many odours, I never encountered elsewhere. I cannot wish that such a Leipsic fashion should be brought home to us, with the Leipsic style and conception of what orchestral music means. But there it was natural, and hearty, and pleasant. Jean Paul speaks of "a crumpled soul:" a better scene for the straightening of the same could not be devised than those merry and obstreperous *finales*, especially if the favour of the misanthropist is to be propitiated by a dish of larks. Those delicate birds are nowhere

to be found in such perfection as upon a Leipsic supper table; and Music, as all the world knows, is a most potent sharpener of the appetite!

CHAPTER II.

TRACES OF BACH.

The chorus of the concerts—The *Thomas-Schule*—The *Thomas-Kirche*—The interior reminding me of "Quintus Fixlein"—A mass in a Lutheran church—The manner of execution—The old days of the *Thomas-Schule*—Music and learning—George Rhau—The Reformation—Luther a promoter of music, though an iconoclast—Slight remembrances of Kühnau and Bach—Music "of all time."—Permanence a characteristic of Bach's style—Bach still the teacher in Leipsic—Style of music and performance most relished in Leipsic—Madame Schumann, with a note on Herr Schumann as a composer—Leipsic taste accused by a visitor of a leaning towards the *perruque*.—*Postscript*, 1852—Some attempt to compare Bach and Handel.

In describing the admirable features of the Leipsic Concerts, I must not forget the chorus. This, indeed, tells as significant a story to the speculative traveller as the Caryatides of the old Berlin Opera House.

On my first visit to the *Gewand-haus*, being

admitted to a rehearsal, I was struck by the sight of half a dozen eager-looking intelligent lads, listening to every note of the orchestra with true German enthusiasm. At the concert, again, in the evening, when compelled, as I have said, to take shelter from the crowd behind the violins and double-basses, I was nearly thrust upon the demolition of a drum by the same troop. These were the boys of the *Thomas-Schule*, who are there educated to take part in all the religious musical services of the town, and who afford, too, their assistance to its secular entertainments; having the privilege, in return, of being present on all occasions when public music is going on. I was sorry to hear (the case demands the reproof of commemoration) that the only instance of this privilege being denied was at the benefit concert of a young English songstress, who had made her foreign reputation by a winter's appearances at the Leipsic Concerts.

Hard by one of the outlets of the old town, —where, but for the restraining girdle of walls, the mass of tall and crowded buildings seems as if it must *pour itself over* upon the gardens, —stands a large irregular mass of gray stone,

the principal member of which, with its high sloping roof, assists picturesquely to break the town "prospect," on which ever side it is contemplated. Close beneath it, the traveller is shown a couple of windows in the gray wall which have an ancient but not a dreary aspect, overlooking as they do a cluster of flowering shrubs. The windows belong to the house of Sebastian Bach, who was for many years *Cantor* of the *Thomas-Schule*. All who have enterprise enough in the cause of good music to rise and fare forth at eight on the Sunday morning may hear the choristers of the still flourishing establishment sing in the church *their* musical services, before the prayers and the preaching commence.

The *Thomas-Kirche*, like most other of the German churches I know, is, internally, a lofty as well as a spacious building; and, though it be no less closely shorn of the *insignia* of Popery, it is infinitely less naked and bleak-looking than the Cathedral at Brunswick. The white walls, on which the stucco has been capriciously destroyed, are hung with galleries and pews like bird-cages, irregularly disposed,—some glazed, others open; a few decorated with escutcheons,

a few with carving and gilding. It would be difficult, I suspect, to explain why the sight of the interior of the church, at that early hour, and of the not very numerous congregation, recalled to me Jean Paul's "Quintus Fixlein," and his other homely pictures of German life, which Mr. Carlyle, and less gifted scholars, have given to the English. But so it was: and as I sat on one of the hard benches in the aisle, waiting for a few minutes till the exercise should begin, I seemed to take a closer glance at the devout and primitive life of the country than had yet been afforded to me; and I felt startled when the first bars, played by a well-selected orchestra led by Herr David, introduced me at once to the sweet and holy "Kyrie" of Beethoven's mass in C major. Somehow or other, the pair of papistical candles on the altar did not shock my Lutheran English eyes so much as the sound of music, with which the genuflexion of priests and the diffusion of incense is associated, startled my ear.

The boys sang remarkably well; and the music requires no common skill and certainty. There is a chromatic modulation in the "Qui

tollis," very difficult to execute in tune, at which I have heard some of our most redoubtable artists hesitate; but it went over so smoothly, and without force, that I scarcely knew when it had passed. The boy, too, to whom was allotted the principal *solo* (according to the ordinance bequeathed to us from olden times, which denies Woman a voice in prayer and praise no less than in state affairs), had tones less freshly crude, and thus more welcome to the ear, than those of any urchin I have ever heard. He was a clever musician, too, as I had often occasion to notice at concert rehearsals; with an arch, audacious eye, and that ready vivacity of look and gesture which seemed to promise the stage an excellent singer on some future day.

It was more than musically interesting thus to stumble upon a relic of the old church foundations, amongst which all Art received its first cultivation and encouragement; and to find one of those very establishments which, by its Mysteries and Moralities enacted on high festival days, afforded to all Christendom the earliest ideas of operatic representation, still remaining, little impaired by change and revolution,

to lend support and encouragement to secular Music.

So long ago as the year 1213, a society of Augustine monks, among other principal objects of education for the good citizens of Leipsic in their monastic school, established also an institution for the training of a band, whose chief duties should be the musical services of the church; duties not held inconsistent with philosophical studies or classical attainments. And hence, from the earliest foundation of the *Thomas-Schule* of Leipsic, the *Cantores* (masters of singing) seem to have been equally distinguished, equally reverenced, with the other teachers of learning and science at this school. In the annals of the establishment, the names of those who taught "plain song" keep loving companionship with those who expounded the dead languages or the secrets of Philosophy. Passing many worthy names, it was only twenty years before the Reformation came, to load all that was of monkish origin with opprobrium, that we find in the records of the *Thomas-Schule* the name of a *Cantor* dwelt upon with particular emphasis. This was George Rhau, the friend of Melancthon and Luther; who, among other composi-

tions, wrote a "Veni sancte Spiritus," which, on the occasion of the opening speech of a Leipsic disputation by Mosellanus, the *Baccalaureus*, he caused his scholars unexpectedly to strike up. Its effect was so solemn and overcoming, that the hearers fell upon their knees with one accord.

When the Reformation came, the *Thomas-Schule* was, of course, remodelled; but, though its Papistical colour was effaced, this did not imply the severance of Music from the severer branches of learning. The idolatries of the Mass were to be abolished; but, to deprive worship of one of its most natural utterances, which the priests and Levites in the Jewish Temple, and the disciples in the Christian Gethsemane, had alike employed, never entered into the brain of the Master-reformer—himself a musician by nature and by cultivation. Everywhere, on the contrary, did Luther inculcate the importance of the honest study, as well as of the chaste and dignified employment of the art. There are few German melodies of the epoch which have kept their place beside the tunes of his *Choral-Buch*. And the tendency of his mighty Reformation, though it was doubtless

destructive to the imitative arts, inasmuch as it struck at the root of that hero-worship which was the originating principle of Painting and Sculpture, so far from bringing degradation to the musician, tended rather to exalt him to a companionship with the highest and most learned teachers of mankind. Thus the *Cantor* of the *Thomas-Schule* fared no worse under the new than under the old dispensation.* The honourable nature of his civic position, under a stricter rule, could not fail to incite him to a wide and noble course of action ; and accordingly we find that, after many less eminent worthies, the predecessor of Bach—Kühnau—was elected organist of the *Thomas-Kirche* at the early age of seventeen years ; the election being a conse-

* In the autumn of 1840, the number of scholars on the foundation was fifty-eight. The qualifications for admission are—good morals, capacity for learning, and some natural musical aptitude ; and the course of instruction is ample, and in concord with the original purposes of the school, that Music should neither be neglected for graver studies, nor deemed unworthy to bear them company. The *Thomas-Schule* has turned out many accomplished musicians—Herr Reissiger, the well-known composer and director of the Dresden Opera, among the number—and was described to me as one of the two most important establishments in North Germany—the other being the *Kreutz-Schule* of Dresden.

quence of the great sensation excited by the performance, at the Leipsic Fair, of one of the stripling's compositions by the students of the University. On his election he availed himself of every opportunity to prosecute the studies of jurisprudence, the mathematical sciences, and the Greek language; and, besides composing and writing many treatises on Music, he was a good Italian and French scholar, and translated several works from those languages. At the age of thirty-three he was elected to the directorship of the music of the Leipsic University, holding this conjointly with the cantorship or musical superintendence of the *Thomas-Schule*.

Of Kühnau's more eminent successor it is alike hard to speak or to be silent: difficult to praise him well—impossible to forget him. He was with me everywhere in North Germany. I thought of him in the clean old-world market-place of the town of his birth, Eisenach; with its church among the linden-trees, and its quaint fountain in the centre of the square; and its flying dolphins and dragons, which lean out from the high battlements of the houses, giving to that work-a-day thing, a spout, an air as quaintly graceful as Elizabethan fantasy gave in England

to that ugly smoke-conduit, a chimney. I thought of his homely, affectionate, conscientious ancestors, by religious persecution driven from their native Hungary to take refuge in the Red Land of Thuringia;*—of their well known meetings, when, on anniversaries and holidays, the dispersed branches of the family used to assemble to make merry and sing edifying or jovial strains; and of the other recorded traits of their simple and loving affection which indicate warm hearts as well as plain lives and strong bodies. I thought of the early difficulties with which little Sebastian had to struggle; not, indeed, great or terrible, as compared with the ogres and giants which other musicians had slain,—but sufficient to prove his nerve and perseverance and resolution to become of weight and worship in his art:—how he sat up on moonlight nights, for want of candle, to copy the whole book of instrumental studies, the loan of which was refused to him by his brother—the one churlish Bach;—how he walked on foot from Arnstadt to Lubeck to hear Dietrich Buxtehude play, like any other stout craftsman, after the fashion of his country, fighting his way

* See Forkel, and the other biographers of Sebastian Bach.

through Germany to perfect himself in his calling; and how, without revealing himself, he studied, for some months, the master's style in secret. I thought of the many tales of the patience, and modesty, and good citizenship which distinguished his manhood and old age; —how much self-respect withal he never failed to show when the dignity of his art, or his own acquirements, were in question. And could all these things be forgotten under the very windows of the house—in that very church—where, for twenty years, he had planned and executed that magnificent series of works, which were never young and never will be old?

That those, indeed, who never looked young never will look old, is an aphorism applicable in Art as well as in physiognomy. Bach was one of these. I can never hear one of his sublime combinations, be it on the smallest scale, without the petty subdivisions of cycle and epoch fading utterly away, — without feeling myself more completely at the feet of a teacher than before any other musician. In them Imagination is chastened, not denied play; — the executive power of human ingenuity called forth to the utmost, yet without the possibility of the ear for

an instant mistaking the means for the end,—that which is outward and transient for that which is inward and perennial. School after school has passed away, form after form been exploded,—and now, when so much has been tried and judged and forgotten, the young musicians of Europe are falling upon the works of Bach as upon a mine of virgin treasure. Thus, we have seen a revival of the love for our Elizabethan drama after its having for awhile passed out of sight—though never into that utter oblivion from which there is no hope of recall or of return to the light of human sympathy.

If, while I was in Leipsic in 1839, I was disposed to rhapsodise about Bach—that least rhapsodical of all composers—it was because every hour's experience confirmed my first impressions that his traditions still leavened the musical taste of the town. The cordial understanding with which all the measures of that most accomplished and liberal of music-directors, Dr. Mendelssohn, were met may have been in part effected by his being steeped in the knowledge and love of the Master of Leipsic.—It was there, at all events, that I first began seriously to believe that, even in one and the same country, style in art might

be found as delicately various as the diversities in the flower for the moment most in request amongst florists. I had long fancied that I could distinguish a Dublin singer by his disposition to drag the *tempo* of his music (in which he shares the idiosyncrasy of the Belgians). I had learned, again, how far a peculiar dialect influences vocal tone, by some acquaintance with our own Lancashire, Norfolk, and Middlesex chorus-singers. But it was only when some comparison of the *manners* of Berlin, Leipsic, and Dresden was forced upon me within a short space of time that I could recognise shades of humour* and tendency as delicate yet as constant in their recurrence as the cut of a leaf or the shape of a blotch of colour (to ramble back to my garden-metaphor).

At Leipsic I found that the merits most cordially admired in instrumental composition and performance were a sober breadth of *reading*—grandeur without ponderosity—expression with-

* I may add that "the Vienna pianoforte-players" have passed into a proverb, as illustrating brilliant and florid style on that instrument. In Dr. Burney's tour, a similar apportionment is also made; Vienna being, according to him, "the most remarkable for fire and invention, Manheim for neat and brilliant execution, Berlin for counterpoint, and Brunswick for taste."

out caricature—light and shade without needless flourish. Whether I was listening to the concert orchestra, or to the pianoforte-playing of Mendelssohn, or to the *organ-playing* on the piano of Madame Schumann (best known in England by her maiden-name of Clara Wieck) who commands her instrument with the enthusiasm of a Sybil, and the grasp of a man,—or to the incomparable leading or quartett playing of my friend Herr David,—the same characteristic preferences forced themselves on my notice, to the satisfaction of the heart and mind, if not always of the imagination. A Leipsic audience seemed to me difficult, and perhaps over-exquisite, in its likings and dislikings, but not captious without the power of giving a reason. Among Beethoven's Symphonies, for instance, his "Pastorale" was the least in favour, and the worst played: the taste of the town then not tending towards musical punning, or (to speak more reverently) to such literal imitation as calls up rivulets, birds, and thunder-storms, even when it is wielded by a Beethoven. Among Moscheles' pianoforte music, his fine broad duett, the "Hommage à Handel" was a never-tiring favourite. In spite of the residence there of Herr

Schumann, whose "Kreissleriana,"* and other pianoforte compositions, are in the very wildest strain of extravagant mysticism, a regular *Concerto* was, in Mendelssohn's day, better relished

* The very title of these compositions, by recalling to the German student one of Hoffmann's most fantastic creations, will acquaint him with their eccentricity and singularity, and their design of not displaying any settled effect. To those who know not Hoffmann's writings in the original or translation I almost despair of unriddling the word in question. Band-master *Kreissler*, of whom a sort of Shandean use is made by that strange humourist, is an eccentric musical enthusiast; hence the fragments bearing his name (and bearing out his character) are as near regular and symmetrical musical compositions as Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" is to a complete epic.—It was said, in 1839-40, that Herr Schumann had declared his resolution of writing a work which should outdo Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Since that time, he has produced largely: and admirers have gathered round him asserting that he has entirely fulfilled the above tolerably ambitious resolution. It appears as if the usual order of affairs had been followed in his case; as if extravagant mysticism, assumed to conceal meagreness of idea, had given way (as the composer grew older and more impatient to secure popularity) to a dullness and heaviness of common-place, little more acceptable, not in the least more beautiful, and certainly less amusing. Opera, *Cantata*, Symphony, Quartett, *Sonata*—all and each tell the same story, and display the same characteristics—the same skill of covering pages with thoughts little worth noting, and of hiding an intrinsic poverty of invention, by grim or monotonous eccentricity. There is a style, it is true, in Dr. Schumann's music—a certain thickness, freaked with frivolity—a mastery which produces no effect—a resolution to deceive the ear, which (as in the case of certain French composers) ends in habituating the

at Leipsic than the most airy and delicate piece of fantasy of the newer schools. "*C'est un peu perruque ici!*" said —— to me one day; a little chagrined, I suspect, on my smiling at his enthusiastic arrogation to Paris of all the musical excellence now remaining in the world. "Perhaps," replied I, "you would call bread, or wine, or any thing else that nourishes without unhealthy stimulus, *perruque*, also?—or think, with the lady in the comedy, that spasms and fits of epilepsy are but an extravagance of health?" "Bah!" was the answer, as he turned upon his heel on his road to *L'Académie* and the *Conservatoire* of the French metropolis.

Postscript, 1852.—During the ten years which have elapsed, since the foregoing sketch was taken, there have been many changes in Leipsic: musically, none for the better, with the ex-

ear to the language of deception; and spoils the taste without substituting any new sensations of pleasure.—Up to the present period Dr. Schumann's music may be said to be submitted to rather than generally accepted in Germany. A general acceptance, I must think, would imply a decadence of taste even more rapid than that which has taken place since the above sketches were made.—1852.

ception of the removal thither of Herr Moscheles, and the accession of so thoroughly and intellectual a professor to the School of Music there. The master influence of the place is gone! Thus, there is something to add to—or rather to take away from—the above character of Leipsic. Of the town itself, and its part in German music, on and since the death of Mendelssohn, a word will be offered in another page. The matter in hand is less narrative—less certain—though it will seem to many, more dogmatic—being simply some attempt to profit by ten years of light and knowledge in appreciating the peculiar genius and services to art of the great Leipsic composer, Sebastian Bach.

This is no easy subject for one who is avowedly unscientific to treat: yet, perhaps, the scientific are hardly in the best case to state the result of impressions, and to perceive the causes and effects of special historical facts. In music, they naturally enough (and wholesomely for Art) mistrust all that is comprehended in the word "*effect*." The master will, by them, be ranged the highest who has thought the deepest, who has looked the furthest, who has known the most. This *dictum*, perhaps, the amateur

may be permitted to amend, by adding, "*and who has spoken the clearest.*"

It is too much forgotten that Music is a twofold art—an art of utterance no less than of meditation—an art, the inventions of which fail unless they captivate. Bach is eminently the composer who *convinces* — the composer whose appeal is stronger to the intellect than to the sympathies—the *Ben Jonson* of musicians, shall I say?—to *Shakspeare* Handel. Shall I venture further, and ascribe the form which the inspirations of these two giants took to circumstance, yet more than to individual temperament?—Perhaps something like a principle of Art may indicate itself in the comparison.

The respective strength of Bach and Handel will be in some degree apportioned, if we consider the historical origin of their great works, and the nature of the same. The Patriarch Bach — for a patriarch he may indeed be called, with his twenty children—appears to have been a grave, robust, serene man; not coveting either publicity or lucre; contented within his own sphere, which, though not precisely limited in its influences, was secure from much vicissitude or collision, or close

and immediate dependence on his public. In his simple and old-fashioned German life of labour and even fortunes, there is something cordially engaging, which, to persons of a reserved or fastidious temper, will appear the *beau ideal* of artistic existence and occupation. Others endowed with more elastic spirits and more sanguine temperament, or who fancy that they have views of life rather higher than those involving the greatest attainable happiness, may question the discretion or the duty of seclusion to the artist. And if their question be waived aside as so much high-flown nonsense—or as a covert plea for the artist's careless, sensual existence—they may go a step further, and declare that the highest works (I speak here only of Music) have NOT been the offspring of serene and self-centred meditation, but have been conceived in haste, born in pain, and modified in a thousand ways by circumstance and concession. It will be seen, I apprehend, that in that special exercise of his skill and invention, where Bach was liable to rivalry, comparison, public criticism (I allude to his organ compositions), he did rise to that freedom and sublimity, he did condescend to that practicability and adaptability which cha-

racterize all the master-pieces of Music. In a less degree, perhaps, but still sufficiently and significantly enough—the same supremacy attends him among the writers of his time as a composer for other keyed instruments. In his treatment of the orchestra (so far as I know it), Bach appears to me conjectural rather than experienced: to have hankered after experiment, and to have toyed with every new discovery without possibly having enjoyed many opportunities of testing the chances of permanence for his new combinations. His scores are full of curiosities of instrumentation, to introduce executive powers which no longer exist.—It is a mistake to conceive that the old orchestras had no variety; they were, on the contrary, filled with conceits and varieties, each one differing from its neighbour. The array of forgotten instruments produced in the year 1845 at our *Ancient Concerts*, may be cited in support of my assertion. Besides the *violino Francese*, *viola d'amore*, *viola de braccio*, *due viola de gamba* (precursors of the stringed quartett) and *chitarra*, were *teorbo*, lute, and *violone*. In the year 1716, when Quantz arrived at Dresden, Dr. Burney tells us, that the orchestra collected by Augustus,

Elector of Saxony, included not only "hautbois," German flute, bassoon, French horn, but also "*pantaleone*" and lute. For orchestras thus fantastically amplified, it may have been Sebastian Bach's pleasure to compose. The trumpet parts in his scores, again,—which now no Harper, Distin, or Arban, can manage, distancing every thing that the author of "Joshua" and "the Messiah" wrote for "the famous Mr. Snow," may be susceptible of this reason in interpretation of their present impossibility. Few or no such delicacies were at the command of Handel in England, and thus he was compelled to write less intricately and more universally.

But, granting to Bach a fertility of fancy and a variety of science in his instrumental works, at least as remarkable as that displayed under our more romantic modern dispensation by any composer,—I cannot conceive (to pursue the subject a step further) that the finest organ fugue in being, or the most curious triple *concerto*, can, in any view, rank with such colossal and beautiful poems as the "Messiah," "Israel," "Judas," "Acis," and "Alexander's Feast," of Handel. To the height of none of these does Bach's

sacred music rise. Granted its grandeur, and the amazing power displayed in its construction, the consciousness of the latter rarely leaves the listener. He is rarely sufficiently rid of the conviction of the composer's ingenuity and skill in overcoming difficulties to be at ease, and to take home the whole with that singleness of heart which is subdued and laid under tribute by the greatest greatness. If it be said that this impression of divided attention, if not discomfort, is merely one of circumstance, owing to the unfamiliarity of performance of Bach's vocal music, such explanation illustrates rather than cancels the objection. To execute it aright, the science of every singer must be kept in a state of the utmost tension. Had the composer held more frequent commerce with great singers, — and not with singing scholars, in some sort machines to be trained and tortured at will—he must have felt that, in every case where the notion of skill must be always kept uppermost with the executant, the soul of the work runs great risk of being unexpressed, and that, thus far, the thing produced is defective. Such is not the case with the "Hallelujah" in the "Messiah," or with the "Hailstone Chorus,"

or with the chorus, "But the waters overwhelmed their enemies," in "Israel;" or with "Wretched Lovers," in "Acis and Galatea."

Now, let us recollect how, why, and when Handel's masterpieces were written. The story is full of instruction. They were composed under no patent of privacy—hardly even of patronage; for Handel's royal patrons in England were not "the fashion," and availed little, so far as history can be trusted, in shielding him from ill fortune. They were undertaken when the old opera-composer, buffeted and beaten by years of contest with fools of quality, and with exacting singers in the Italian Opera House of London, was at last virtually excluded thence—discarded as worn out—as one who had said all he had to say, and who, having pleased "the town" as much as "the town" wanted, must, therefore, of necessity, be thrust aside and laid on the shelf, in favour of the newest importation from Italy. Such had been Handel's past—such was his plight—when, not utterly to justify the malignants by retiring a broken and ruined man, he set himself to consider how he could still keep his ground in London!—To myself,

there is something at once noble and affecting in this vigour and vivacity of spirit, maintained in the face of so much ill fortune and caprice; and much as I love to think of the homely, brave old German musicians living (with their pipes) in their pleasant garden-houses—holding forth concerning "their mystery" to devout congregations, with an honest tediousness, and working their best, in self-assertion and self-appreciation—I am made prouder for the poet, prouder for the artist, prouder for "the immortal part" which exists in every genius, let his form be ever so human, when I recollect that they can be bright, energetic, and glorious enough—as they were in Handel's case—to defy time, and to conquer caprice, and to turn circumstance to account; and still to produce those imperishable creations, the value and the beauty of which are never-ceasing.—In the popularity of the two men, may, for once, be found the measure of their greatness: in this, too, bearing out my parallel betwixt their respective works, and "The Alchymist," as compared with "Lear," or "Othello."—The one is full of matter for study, not excluding delight; the other is full of matter for delight,

not excluding study.—In the one, the head predominates over the heart and fancy; in the other, heart and fancy dominate, not predominate, over head. We grow into love with Bach as a curious and recondite author, who is also manly, noble, intelligent, and abundant in thought; but we begin in love with Handel, and, as we go on, our love expands in our appreciation of his richness, variety, simplicity, and the colossal sublimity of result—which no familiarity can render tiresome, which no comparison can make less, which no novelty can cast into shade.

CHAPTER III.

MUSICAL JOURNALISM.

Musical publication—Confession not prohibition—The journalist a new influence in Music—Difficulty of finding competent critics—The false position of the Artist with respect to the Critic especially false in Germany—*Small town* life—Damage done to art, creative and executive, and to taste.

When Leipsic music and the Leipsic Fair are the topic, the mind of every one in the least conversant with the Art, will naturally turn in the direction of musical publication, recollecting how long that spirited and friendly town has been one of the main centres to which the poet has looked for the means of diffusing his works, and the knowledge of his works, hither and thither.

But if I advert to the Leipsic utterances of and concerning Music in paper and ink, it is not

again to dwell on the gorgeous, liberal, cheap, and correct works poured out in remarkable profusion by the Leipsic publishers, but rather to dwell on another relation of the press with Music; even though it may be thought by many persons, one on which it is indecorous for me to dwell at all. Having myself attempted journalism with reference to Music, it may be held that I have no right to speak of the secrets of the printing-office in other lands; that I am betraying trust, faithless to my own guild, and disloyal in return for courtesy.

With this canon I can but in part agree. While few can regard personality in any form, as a more unbeseeming misuse of experience and confidence than myself, no one writing on Art must avoid (in dread of being misconstrued) from dealing with any important estate that at once influences its well-being, and reflects its quality. What is more, few so thoroughly as one who has some practical knowledge of journalism, can appreciate its privileges and its temptations. I should conceive it to be a coarse impertinence were I to attempt to record the good and bad fortunes of the classical and romantic musical journals of Leipsic,—to discuss

the knowledge, the style, and the success of any one among the confraternity of writers, great or small. I am not going to spoil private courtesies by proclaiming them, nor to rake up petty scandals, under pretext of illustration; nor to approach vexed questions with the hasty arrogance of a passing tourist; but, as a man of the press, I may speak earnestly and generally on the manner in which its nature and functions are misunderstood, rendered difficult of exercise, and deprived of much value, owing to too high a fear of it, and too low a self-respect on the part of the artist.

As far as concerns Music, the press, as a patron or a punisher, is, comparatively, a new power. In the time of Mozart, the artist had to manœuvre for presents, for court-appointments: here, to win a favourable word from a Prince; there, to wait a day in some great man's ante-chamber. Every publisher was then little better than a pirate; every pupil might then cross into another state with a surreptitious copy of a score, and neither check nor redress existed. Some of these abuses still cling to the musician's career in Germany (if not elsewhere too), but he has now a means of appeal—of making himself

known — in theory far more congenial to the independent artist than any courtiership to Electors, or to Gold Sticks in waiting. The Critic has largely replaced the Patron. — But the demand for what is to pass as criticism, has grown faster than the supply. The persons who can addict themselves to the literature of Art—still more those who will occupy themselves in its most fragmentary and exhausting tasks as a pleasure, a pursuit, and a duty,—are, of necessity, few in every country. If artistic criticism be embraced as a trade, it is of all trades the poorest : an ill-remunerated labour, carried on in the midst of a life of apparent show and dissipation. There is every temptation, in the journalist's own position, for him to tamper with his responsibilities "for a consideration;" and if he receives warning against dishonour (hardly understood as such) or encouragement to hold evenly on his way, year by year adding to his knowledge, it is rarely that either reaches him from the artist. For how curiously has the position of the Critic been misunderstood by the musician!—How has the latter, by crouchings or by threats, permitted or defied the former to assume an absurd

predominance, and encouraged the writer to play the part of master over the artist, of avenger against enemy, whereas he is simply the servant of the public!—And observe the result: the incompetent, the immoral, and the impudent, having no principles of judgment, no code of truth or falsehood to restrain them, being tempted to be unjust and exacting, open themselves to all manner of persuasions, direct and indirect; and here by suppression, there by exaggeration, make, as the French phrase runs, fair and foul weather — the artist himself conniving at the quackery by which the public is to be abused, and the art vitiated.—For it is not only the mediocrities with whom the journalist's is a name of fear. The highest and the finest spirits—the most cultivated, the most truthful, the most famous of their order—may be found uneasy in the presence of the meanest practitioner with pen and ink, till his favour has been propitiated, and his friendship made.—This is no fancy-picture—no exception described by way of rule. Those who resist such weakness, by word, look, and sign, are the very few; and, alas! for poetical justice, they suffer accordingly.

It does not seem to me that this canker eats

into the musical world so deeply anywhere as in Germany : that the artists of any other country are so directly and obsequiously solicitous for the support, or to speak more explicitly, for the commendation of the newspapers, as the German artists are. Their behaviour in London and Paris must not altogether be explained away, on their cherishing an ill-based awe of the intellectual sophistication and profligacy of those capitals—to the bad habits of which, while endeavouring to conform, they conform immoderately. At home, in their village-towns, in their garden-houses, in their pleasant suburban walks,—in their coffee and beer-drinking moments of idling sociability, when men most desire friendly company around them,—I have seen great artists intruded, traded, and sponged upon by those whom no considerations short of a cowardly expediency could have induced them to tolerate. No wonder, therefore, that the meaner sort of musicians—such being the home-habit of some among the mightier—will leave no stone unturned, no access unattempted, no means untried, when, on arriving in foreign *El Dorados*, they are seized with an uneasy consciousness that their attractions may be fewer than the public of *El Dorado* is ac-

customed to demand and to requite. For some among the mediocre, this system of courted influence, and unmerited praise, works profitably at home and abroad; but for many a rising genius, better in acquirements, better in delicacy, better in conscience—it doubles every struggle —it embitters every trial—it protracts every expectation. Such men ought to be protected by their greater brethren who have climbed the hill, won the spurs, been invested with the robe and the crown; and such can only be aided, inasmuch as the Critic is kept in his right place, which is that of sworn truth-teller, not suborned witness. This, the public, ignorant of facts, can hardly effect; but this the masters of Art should accomplish, by a simpler and more even intercourse with the competent and the upright, and by a settled and steady avoidance of the ignorant and the false.—They have in Germany to fight against the pleasures and the foibles of what may be called *small town* life—to be there, more than elsewhere, on their guard against petty gossip, petty jealousy—the weariness that comes of over-intimacy, the recoil of an enthusiasm which has made the most—not the least—of its professions. It should be there, therefore,

more than anywhere else, recollected that a feather in a man's hand does not give him wings to his shoulders, and convert him into a chartered angel; whose name must be spoken with dread so soon as ever his praise or blame appear in the journal:—that a desire to merit honest and well-reasoned praise does not mean, that melancholy antechamber-work of prostration and propitiation to the coarse and the venal, which some had hoped died with the death of the old-world aristocratic patronage. It should be recollected that those whom artists really trust and esteem do not require such humbling civilities: that the Critic moves the most freely, lives the most happily, and performs his task the most uprightly, when the privacy of his reserve is respected, and when no man approaches him to insinuate into his mouth his own hopes and fears—his own words or thoughts—concerning himself and his works. Beyond this, by the slightest interference, do artists trammel and vitiate that private discussion and interchange of opinion, which might on both sides be so valuable and interesting. Not only do they waste their own time and energy—not only do they wear out and drag down such poetry as may have been given

to them,—but they set an example deadly to the honesty of the less successful—and which may be fatal to the conscientious, in shutting them out of opportunity, because they will not fawn, and press, and solicit, as the habitual conditions of intercourse demand! The heart-ache, which their own unworthy timidity has to answer for, is such as no generous man would love to bear upon his conscience.—Again, the popular idea that the least dispraise is to be considered as malevolence, and actively to be silenced, virtually renders it impossible for artists to serve Art, as they might do most importantly, by themselves ever and anon lending a hand to the diffusion of knowledge and the culture of taste, in criticizing great new musical works, the styles and fashions of the hour, the artists that interpret, and the public that is to be gratified. Inasmuch as breach of confidence is abominable, and as that which is said in private should be kept for private use (save in very rare cases), a fearless and chivalrous intercourse in public is good for art; but, as matters stand, this is next to impossible to every musician, who will be neither parasite nor partisan.

All the evils of this perversely ill-understood relation are developed by the very life which seems so delightful in Germany—of small circles and small towns, and perpetual intercourse as distinct from real friendship.—I have spoken freely of the difficulties I found in Berlin, from the critical habits of the place; but I may add, that no where have I partaken of a great musical pleasure in Germany without being cognizant of sunken rocks close to the surface of the water. From his own personal ease or distress, no man can generalize;—it is the words dropped in dark corners, by those with whom one has slight acquaintance; it is the tedious guest welcomed (owned as tedious when his back is turned); it is the coarse familiar, permitted to be familiar; it is the incompetent creature primed like a parrot, with raptures transcendental, or good plain homely vituperation — it is sights like these, when Self looks on, that are to be trusted, and collected for evidence.—And sights like these I have seen in Germany too often for the chronicler not to allude to them as frequent phenomena,—the more, since, I repeat, the false state of opinion which endures and multiplies them

exercises a poisonous and a paralyzing influence alike on the strong and on the less strong artist, and enables the worthless and the venal still further to hold back Art, by abusing the credulity of the public.

DR. SPOHR'S MUSIC.

A CRITICISM.

DR. SPOHR'S MUSIC.

A CRITICISM.

A shrine unvisited—Reasons for avoiding the subject—Reasons for dealing with it—Decline of popularity—Dr. Spohr's influence on Germany as a writer for the violin—His *concertos*—His chamber-music—His orchestral richness—His symphonies—His operas—Want of melodic freshness—Want of dramatic vigour—His oratorios.

Among the stations which the pilgrim of Music in Germany might conceive himself bound to visit is the pleasant town of Cassel. The same reasons, however, as would tempt me entirely to avoid the subject, were it possible, have made that little capital a shrine unvisited by me. To write of an excellent man—a worthy musician still living, and still pursuing the career of honourable industry in creation—is not easy for one

who conceives that the influence which such a celebrity has exercised on his art in Europe is already proved to have been partial or curiously transitory. But it is not admissible, when treating of modern German music, to pass over the career and works of Dr. Spohr—such utter silence being more disrespectful to the artist's self, and more offensive to his admirers, than the most qualified admiration could possibly be.

The secrets of the temporary charm exercised over most lovers of German art by Dr. Spohr's compositions, and of the no less general sequel, a gradual disenchantment with respect to them, are not difficult to unriddle, if we consider the strange union of polished richness of manner and meagreness of idea which the bulk of his music presents; and if we recollect, that whereas manner fascinates admiration, it is the union of imagination and thought—it is matter, in short—that retains respect. On making acquaintance with a new author and a new style, few listeners can coolly determine in what proportion the above superficial and internal merits are combined. For a while, chords and closes which they have not heard before—an attractive distribution of instruments—a full sonority, the mono-

tonous elaboration of which has not yet been found out, can seduce the ear into forgetting that the subjects wrought upon are neither new nor true ones—or into fancying that it may have unluckily began with some of the less vigorous and felicitous compositions of a master who can think more originally than he has done in the example under consideration.—Beyond this, an independent charm and merit exist in certain devices analogous to the mixtures of the painter's *palette* — a certain individuality and genius even,—which, within their own limit, and irrespectively of all other considerations, demand recognition. Colour has "a soul to be saved," as well as form, as well as idea. But were men to recognise Domenichino merely by his deep golden yellow, or Wouvermanns solely because of his white horse, and if men became convinced that the one had only second-hand expression, and the other only threadbare and theatrical romance to exhibit, however effectively the yellow and the white might set off borrowed fancies or assemblages of objects not worth the painting—in the hundredth as well as in the tenth work—the time would come (for most of them) at which such applications of gold or silver, in

place of being regarded as inventions, would be rejected as tricks by which taste was outraged and appetite satiated.

Some such conviction is apt to steal into, and ultimately to possess the minds of those who commenced their intercourse with Dr. Spohr's music the most enthusiastically. One section of his numerous compositions excepted—the rest, on short experience, may be instantaneously recognised by their strong family likeness one to the other, and will be far longer remembered by their manner than by their matter. When this manner has been once mastered, the decline and fall of admiration is merely a question of time. Some men can worship a set smile longer than others, but all end sooner or later in worshipping it less than they did when it began to smile on them.

There is more, however, than "set smile" in Dr. Spohr's music. It has its times and places of vitality and individual intelligence, as well as that general air of swooning, over-luxurious, elaborate grace, which conceals its poverty in significance and variety, so well, and so long, with some even for ever. The excepted section of Dr. Spohr's compositions referred to—all that he has pro-

duced for the violin as a *solo* instrument, permanently establishes him among the great German composers, and claims high and grateful honour.

Before Dr. Spohr came, the great violinists who had given to Europe law and gospel, canons of playing, and music to play, had been mostly Italians and Frenchmen — Corelli, Geminiani, Giardini, Rode, Viotti, and others. Following the law of Italian composition, in proportion as Opera had become more and more seductively developed, their writings, however melodiously charming, had become thinner and thinner—as regards scientific merit, lingering behind a time in which Symphony, Overture, Quartett, and *Sonata*, were rapidly monopolizing all that deep contrapuntal science which had of old belonged exclusively to sacred vocal composition,—and essentially ephemeral, because they were merely calculated to exhibit the effects and graces, not so much of the instrument, as of particular players on that instrument. — With this, the style of execution changed, and the love for a particular form of melody was allowed so largely to predominate, that, provided large *cantilenas* were

alternated with showy individualities of passage, the public asked for little beyond. Opposed to such flimsy pieces of brilliancy, where every grace and freak, moreover, was noted, so as to spare the executant any labour of invention, such more solid yet simpler *concertos* as Mozart's, in which the player was expected to work out, embroider, and finish the composer's sketch, had no chance. The former required execution —the latter, genius under instant command. On the other hand, such strict *concerto* writing as Beethoven's, who made the *solo* player merely one of an orchestra—tying him and taming him, and only setting him free to show his power when the *cadenza* arrived—could not be rated as wholly filling the end proposed. Self-effacement is of itself meritorious and dignified; but when we repair to witness display, self-effacement is not the merit nor the dignity that we desire to meet. We then want power, mastery, resource, individuality exhibited; and if they be exhibited so as to conciliate sound principles, noble forms, and skilful structure in Art—if they be put forth in embellishment of great and true thoughts—the exhibition is a high intellectual pleasure, as such raised far

above the triumphs which belong to pieces exciting mere superficial wonderment.

This combination has been felicitously and thoroughly effected by Dr. Spohr, in his *solo* violin music. I speak here not merely of his Concertos, but also of his *solo* quartetts, still more of his *duetts* for two instruments; in which the compromise betwixt what is classical and severe, and what is exciting and gracious, could hardly be carried to higher perfection. Curiously enough, in these exhibitional works, his thoughts and phrases have a nerve, a brightness, and a contrast, which seem to fail the master, when composition, for composition's sake (and without reference to display), has been the task in hand. He is here less tedious in structural writing—warmed, as it were, by the necessity of producing an immediate effect on his audience, out of the languors, delays, pedantries, which oppress us in almost all his other works. The intense personal self-occupation, which, when he approaches Music as a thinker, so often seduces him into weariness, is a safeguard to him when he creates as a *player*. Even his double quartetts are not guiltless of dreary and over-wrought passages, stale thoughts, barren

spaces. They cannot be laid up with the best writings of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven (not, for courtesy's sake, to speak of more modern writers). But his *Concertos* and *Duos* are, of their kind, first of the first; and that their production, performance, and practice, has been a blessed thing for the great and noble school of violin-players in Germany, is a fact no more to be denied than that Mozart helped opera a step forward, and Beethoven the orchestra, and Clementi the pianoforte.

I have sometimes speculated how far the circumstance of *solo* exhibition on the violin being the centre from which Dr. Spohr's creative force has radiated, may or may not have influenced him, when trying the larger and more general range of musical invention. A late ingenious German writer has spent some ingenuity in denouncing the pianoforte as a starting point—forgetting that, on its keyboard, the full score can be somehow represented; and that, though all players are apt when writing to be seduced into the pettinesses of finger-music, all the least meretricious, and grandest, and most original composers of modern times—Mozart, Weber, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer — have been

great players. But we have no such list of instances for the violin. So far as I can recollect, Dr. Spohr is the only *concerto* performer on a stringed instrument who has attempted to win great general reputation as a composer; and thus, comparison being denied to us, it is impossible to ascertain how far his imagination may have been thereby trammelled, without his own connivance. But few will deny that it is in this special style of composition that Dr. Spohr rises highest: the limits of his power being indicated in the fact, that his chamber-music—in which the pianoforte, not the violin, is principal—is a failure (the well-known Quintett with wind instruments making the exception). Another special merit of interest and value is indisputably his property. In orchestral combination, Dr. Spohr's gift of colour has great attractiveness. He produces a certain richness of sound, by an even balance betwixt the wind and stringed instruments, which is delightful and satisfying—satiating only because it is not accompanied by any variety, or by any reserve. The treasures of the *cornucopia* are showered upon us by him in perpetual fullness—no single tint or flavour being allowed to preponderate,

or, by being produced in pure and solitary brightness, to enhance the splendour of the full harmony which follows it. Hence the overtures and symphonies of Dr. Spohr rank with me as second in merit to his double quartetts, *Concertos*, and less ambitious compositions for the violin. The rhythm of his Overture to "Jessonda" causes it to stand out from among its brethren. His Symphony in D minor is pleasing, because it is naturally expressive—sweet without sickliness, and solid without stupidity. The *allegro* and the *march*, again, in his "Power of Sound" Symphony, are among their composer's happiest inspirations—as such, printing themselves deeply and distinctly in the memory of the most fastidious. But whereas, in compositions on so vast a scale, mere treatment will not suffice to interest—and there must be vigour of idea, and vivacity of contrast—and whereas the first thoughts of Dr. Spohr are apt to be threadbare, insipid, and uninteresting — it is curious to observe the expedient to which he has resorted, during his career, to hide this primal poverty. In place of addicting himself to a wise and scrutinizing study of melody—such as we have reason to think was never out of Haydn's

view,* whence Haydn's extraordinary fecundity and progress — it would seem as if the excellent *Kapellmeister* of Cassel had fancied that ambitious and mystical subjects, necessarily implied picturesque and various thoughts—and, confounding objects with means of illustration, had conceived that such titles as "Human Destiny," "the Sounds of Life," "the Seasons of the Year," &c., would stand him in stead, and deceive the public as well as the master, into forgetting that each new experiment was essentially more poor, more barren, more cloying than its predecessor.—It would be interesting to ex-

* There are few points in Music less carefully studied than this same matter of melody. There are few in which judicious study would bring a richer repayment: since I am convinced that by cultivation, self-scrutiny, with a perpetual reference to ease and nature, rather than to an over-solicitous originality, a vein, originally thin, may be strengthened, swelled in bulk, and rendered precious. That mere practice in tune-making will do something for writers of a peculiar organization, may be seen by comparing the sickly and imitative airs of Donizetti's "Anna Bolena," with the fourth act of his "Favorite," and his *Serenade* in "Don Pasquale"—both operas written when he was "written out," as the phrase is. But thought, selection, polish, with a perpetual reference to attract, and not to astonish, will do more—not, indeed, supply the place of inspiration; but add much expression, pertinence, and symmetry to fancies in their birth characterless and feeble.

amine how far habits of life and occupation, modes of thought, and expansion or reserve of artistic sympathies, have tended to conduce to this indifference to first ideas — by bringing about a frame of complacent and mechanical industry, to which every theme that presents itself is equally valuable and new; but such examination must be left for musical biographers to come. It is enough to state the result, and to bring forward the want of freshness and monotony of the composer, as a reason why, after a time, all but a small circle of admirers, become wearied of his music, — and wherefore his influences upon the world of German composers have been little, or none, and with the many have already died out.

We shall see this more clearly, if, turning from his instrumental compositions, we think, for one instant of Dr. Spohr's operas. Strictly speaking, his writings cannot be called unmelodious; since music more symmetrical than his has never been written. The most graceful Italian garden, where

"Grove nods to grove—each alley has its brother,"

is not arranged with a more perpetual refer-

ence to reflexion, parallel, reply, repetition, than the largest or the least piece of handiwork put forth by this arithmetically-orderly composer. Further, Dr. Spohr's vocal ideas and phrases have, for the most part, a certain suavity and flow, belonging to the good school of graceful *cantabile*, eminently commendable, when not indisputably charming. But it is difficult, nay, I may say, at once impossible, to cite any *motivo* from his pen, which, by its artless vivacity, seizes and retains the ear; and there are few of his melodies that do not recall better tunes, by better men. Perhaps, no one but himself has written three operas that keep the stage—which "Faust," "Zemire und Azor," and "Jessonda," may be said to do—without having added a solitary bar to the stores of his country's popular music. It is impossible to mistake his manner of treating or combining his materials; but the leading phrases of his finest airs, such as the great songs of *Cunigonda*, *Faust*, and *Mephistopheles*, in "Faust,"—the *romance* in "Zemire und Azor,"—and the opening of the pleasing duet betwixt *Amazili* and *Nadori*, in "Jessonda,"—have not a trace of such individuality as that by which we recognise a

tune by Haydn, Handel, Mozart, Rossini, Auber, or, even, in his happiest moments, by Bellini. They are elegant, and sweet; but without character, and without personality.—Local colour (as the word is understood) there is none in his operas—save an attempt at abruptness, perhaps, in some of the music given to *Mephistopheles*, and a certain voluptuous oriental languor in the funeral music which opens the story of the widow of Malabar. Yet Dr. Spohr seems, from the first, to have rather courted than avoided subjects calling for the most brilliant and various colouring; to have sought for his effects in *costume* and scenery (so to say) rather than in passion. A national instinct towards the mystic and supernatural, drove him to select "Faust" as a subject, long ere Weber wrote "Der Freischütz." Yet compare the Brocken music of Dr. Spohr's opera, which might be a dance of Swiss milkmaids, with Weber's supernatural scenes in the "Wolf's Glen," and the weakness and want of significance in the former, are enough to lead the uninitiated to imagine that the labour must have been one of compulsion, not love. The intention to be fantastic and fearful may have been there; but

the result is little better than a harmless and quaint *bergerie*.

This general and gentle insipidity of tone, again, in Dr. Spohr's first thoughts, is impressed more ineffaceably on the hearer, in his operas than in his instrumental compositions—by his mannerism—by his perpetual use of chromatic harmonies and progressions—by one or two favourite devices of counterpoint and accompaniment, and by the thickness (rather than richness) of the tissue in which he loves to set his idea, be it ever so minute. His indifference to the text or the humour of the scene, is as complete as it is with the most flimsy of the Italian opera-makers. Let the situation be ever so impassioned, let the stir and the hurry of the music have been ever so significantly prefaced and prepared for, the climax never comes with Dr. Spohr. Throughout the "Faust" and "Jessonda," with all his skill, he never manages either to fascinate or to excite,—but falls flat and dull;—midway betwixt the melodic German opera-writers, of whom Mozart was the greatest, and the symphonic school of stage composers, of whom Beethoven was the first. And the attention, after being once, twice, thrice excited

and disappointed, subsides into a tranquil acquiescence with the respectable endowments of the musician; which in its turn (with persons of impatient and excitable spirits) wanes into an *ennui* that no reason can combat, that no conviction can cure.

If as an opera-composer, Dr. Spohr cannot be acquitted of vapidity and tediousness (arising from an essential poverty in the dramatic element), we shall not find these compensated for by any extraordinary gravity or grandeur in his sacred music. His melody is not better in his oratorios than in his operas; and his science is more conventional—moving within still narrower limits on sacred than on profane ground. In all that formed the delight of the elder ecclesiastic writers, Dr. Spohr shows himself at best a timid and pedantic scholar. His fugues are lean, monotonous, and undignified; introduced frequently enough to prove that he does not hold with those sceptics of the modern school who decry fugual writing, as an insolent parade of the periwig—but, alas! never introduced without also showing painful inferiority and lack of resource in their maker.—Curiously dead and stale, again, are Dr. Spohr's recitatives,—singu-

larly uncouth to declaim, owing to his immoderate use of chromatic modulation; and without grasp, or solemnity, or coherence with the spirit of Holy Writ. Now that the seduction excited by the manner of "The Last Judgment" has subsided among the English—now that we can separate the awe of the subject of that oratorio from the enamelled smoothness of demi-tint in which it has been finished off by the musical colourist — we listen with as much weariness as wonder to the small and undignified voices that narrate the tremendous incidents of the hour of eternal doom and consolation. The *mezzo-soprano* recitative that introduces the final quartett and chorus of the First Part, the bass recitative which, early in the Second Part, prefaces the coming of terror, wrath, and destruction, may be referred to, as justifying, with their timid and unmeaning feebleness, a criticism which, without instances cited, might be thought disrespectfully severe. Let any one that studies the union of sound with sense compare these with any similar pages by Handel,—or with "There were Shepherds," in "The Messiah;"* or with

* To those desirous of examining further, may be recommended a comparison betwixt the deeper portions of Handel's

the passage introducing *Miriam's* song of triumph in "Israel," where the most soulless of singers must be upborne, animated, and ennobled by the phrases set down for him to deliver;—and not merely the mistaken system, but the powerlessness and want of poetry in the modern writer, will reveal themselves too clearly to be questioned.

Still this "Last Judgment" (of Dr. Spohr's three oratorios, his first and freshest composition) is not to be left without a word in hearty admiration of certain portions of it,

most famous oratorio, and Dr. Spohr's "Calvary," where the newer composer has not shrunk from setting the same scenes, nay, almost the same words, as his illustrious predecessor. And here, if Handel's thoughts vindicate themselves the sublimity of their inspiration, Handel's science reveals itself as no less colossal. It is remarkable how every vocal chord of the old German writer "draws blood" by the perfect skill with which it is combined and adapted for the voices; it is no less observable how, with the modern master, ignorance or disdain of the powers and privileges of vocal effect, deprives the most ambitious of his choruses of force, authority, and brilliancy. Strain, difficulty, and confusion are every where—owing to the reckless want of selectness with which the inner parts of the vocal quartett are written. In spite of the enormous means of effect added to the orchestra since Handel's time, whereas *his* least vehement choruses strike us down by their force, Spohr's most violent ones weary us by their comparative impotence.

which are as sound and as real as the parts just denounced are false in taste and poor in meaning. The double quartetts "Lord God of Heaven and Earth," and "Blest are the departed," show Dr. Spohr on his highest ground as an expressive interpreter of situation—as combining pure vocal melody with harmonies of a touching and holy solemnity.—In these the super-sweetness which elsewhere cloys us in his writings, is felt less than usual—because of the superior vigour and simplicity of the phrases. There is something at once gorgeous and pathetic in the effect produced by his peculiar combination and alternation of the *solo* and the choral voices. The melancholy grandeur of the evening hour, when the wide western horizon is piled with one vision of cloud-glory above another, as the forms and hues change and fade away, and the blue sky deepens, when the more splendid tints have floated past,—is recalled by this music—by the funeral strain especially. It is the type and perfection of Dr. Spohr's one form of devotional utterance:—it keeps its place in the mind, as a high thing among the high things of Art, however steadily the entire work, on being more frequently heard, sinks in consideration,

loses interest, and becomes appreciated as the manufacture of one unselect and industrious—with whom Opera, Part-song, Overture, Quartett, all take the same physiognomy, abide the same conduct, and are all tamed and trained into the same mechanically-constraining mould of structure.

Such are a few hints and characteristics of the talent of the patriarch of German musical composition. They are put forth merely as criticisms on works before the world, as such fair objects of comparison: and the inference to be drawn from them, as foreshowing the place which the excellent *Kapellmeister* of Cassel will hold in the Pantheon of Musicians, may be left to those who agree with the justice of what has been advanced.—I have a comfort in believing that this chapter will never reach those whom it would pain me to pain, by offering an appreciation of their idol so unflattering, and which (to them) will seem so unfair and irreverent.

A GLANCE AT VIENNA.

1844.

A GLANCE AT VIENNA.

CHAPTER I.

TRADITIONS OF VIENNA.

Objects of pilgrimage—The future preferred to the past—Burney's time compared with the present—The residents at Vienna in Burney's time—Gluck, Hasse, Faustina—Salieri, Gasmann, with a biographical sketch—The greater period which followed—Austrian influences on art—Mozart, Beethoven—Strange decline of creative energy—Its causes to be explained.

THERE is no lover of art to whom the name of Vienna has not been a spell of power from his youth upwards. The capital that could attract and retain Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, will, by many, be exalted as the first musical shrine that should be sought by the holiday pilgrim.

But the objects of pilgrimage are different. To some it will be the past—to some the future.

I had long believed that Vienna must be a place with a musical past chiefly; for the musical present, which consists merely in a constant repetition of favourite works by favourite masters, and which does nothing in nurture of fresh creative art, is, after all, only *a past* prolonged—leading to nothing, and implying as much mechanical tradition as real reverence. The poet has finely said—

> "We do not serve the dead—the past is past.
> God lives, and lifts his glorious mornings up
> Before the eyes of men, who wake at last,
> And put away the meats they used to sup,
> And on the dry dust of the ground outcast
> The dregs remaining of the ancient cup,
> And turn to wakeful prayer and worthy act."

The test of art being in a flourishing state, is not appreciation only, it is also production. Compare the average gains of the musician in the present day with what they were in 1772, when Burney visited Vienna!—count the profits now derived from popular sympathy,—and then consider the comparative pittance at that period bestowed on the artist of genius by the princely patronage to which he was obliged to look for his reward.—Compare the audiences and the plaudits at command of the master in our time, with what

they were in Burney's! Yet what was there for any musical pilgrim to Vienna in 1844 comparable with what Burney found there in the early morning of instrumental music's brightest day?

The comparison is worth following out. In 1772, Gluck was residing in the Austrian capital in all the prime of his powers—with his "Iphigenie" complete in his head, though not committed to paper. Noverre (the most poetical and intellectual of ballet-masters) was superintending the *spectacles* at the opera. Hasse, the composer, and his wife Faustina the ex-*prima donna*, were resting on their laurels, and had been giving lessons to *L'Inglesina*, Miss Cecilia Davis the singer. The lady could communicate her own recollections of Farinelli, and her own anecdotes of Handel's "great style of playing the harpsichord and organ," together with her criticism (how characteristic this of her nation!) on his *cantilena*, as "being often rude." Haydn had not yet wholly beaten out of the field the elder symphonist, Vanhall. Salieri had composed "Il Barone," as "a scholar of Herr Gasmann."

The last-named master and scholar are both worth lingering with for different reasons. The former is perhaps best remembered by Mozart's

fixed idea in his latter days, that he was dying of Italian poisons administered to him at Salieri's instance;—a sick dream, not more fearful and baseless, however, than similar notions which have stirred other German musical circles during our own lives! Yet after Dr. Burney's visit, Salieri became the composer of note who was appointed to finish "Les Danaides," when Gluck faltered over the task because of old age. He was the composer most in vogue, too, it would seem — since annalists tell us that the brilliant success of his "Tarare" in Paris, at the *Grand Opera*, caused him to be called for in person — a compliment which had been paid to no predecessor.—The claims on recollection of Herr Gasmann are of a different order. He was one of those Bohemian musicians concerning whom an interesting and picturesque chapter of local history might be furnished to the more universal chronicler of Music. Born at Brüx in 1729, educated at the seminary of Komathau, and trained in music by one Woberzil, the choir-master at Brüx, the boy seems to have picked up much which is rarely learned in a course of orderly musical culture. Among other instruments, he learned the harp;

and on his father wishing to make a tradesman of him, turned rebel, and, with *King David's* instrument on his back, trudged out into the world to seek his fortune.—This was not hard to find, since he seems to have possessed a simple and genial nature, as well as the true artist's temperament; and at Carlsbad (even then a rallying place for noble persons) his success was so great, that, in fifteen days, say the annalists, he gathered together nearly a thousand crowns! For a boy who had been turned out with a florin in his pocket, this seemed a treasure—a sum, at least, offering means for fulfilling his long-cherished desire of going to Italy. But Gasmann could also spend like a genius, it appears; for we next learn that, by the time he got to Venice, the purse of *Fortunatus* became empty—and that the youth, dispirited in a strange land, threatened with poverty, and unable to make his talent known, was found in some *calle* or *piazza*, drowned in tears, by a Samaritan priest, who stopped and inquired their cause. The Bohemian had got a little Latin at his seminary, and in this dead language explained himself with such success that the Priest took home the wanderer, kept him as an inmate, gave him masters,

and subsequently sent him to "be finished" by Padre Martini at Bologna. After two years of study at Bologna, Gasmann became organist in a convent at Venice; and there rose to such high repute among the nuns (in those days no bad connoisseurs—the number of ecclesiastical music-schools in Venice being considerable), that one sister spoke of the Bohemian to a distinguished amateur, Count Lionardo Veneri (*Veniero?*). This magnificent personage proved even a better *Mæcenas* than the priest had been; —since he took Gasmann home, gave him apartments in the Veniero palace, the use of the Veniero purse, and, it is expressly added, "leave to invite ten or a dozen persons every day" to the Veniero table.—The day of such munificences has passed away; or rather, the humour to indulge in them has changed classes. Noble things are still done, but they are done by the Broadwoods and Erards — the burgher rather than the aristocratic lovers of Art!

There is more to tell concerning Gassmann, which marks character and illustrates manners. His fame, in 1763, as a dramatic and ecclesiastical composer, had passed from Venice to Vienna;—he was sent for to the Austrian capi-

tal by the Emperor Francis I.; and received there with appointments most liberal for those times, and great court favour. Being desirous of marrying the daughter of a decayed nobleman, it is said that his popularity, and the visible helplessness displayed by his arriving at court with ends of silk adhering to his coat, mollified the Emperor Joseph (who did not love that his artists should marry) into authorizing the match. Five years after his marriage, when Gasmann died, in 1774, in consequence of an accident, the Empress Maria Theresa (who *did* love that her artists should have family ties) offered to be godmother to a second little girl, born a few days after her father's death, and settled a pension on both daughters. The list of the works of this prosperous man is considerable—including sacred *cantatas*, chamber-music, and twenty operas; but how completely have his name and fame passed away! In no art, not even the actor's, is oblivion so complete as in creative Music. Yet such a life as the one above baldly sketched from a biographical dictionary, if thoroughly told, must be full of character and instruction.

Such were the second-rate men of Vienna,

at the period of Burney's visit. At that time "the little Mozart," so far from being dreamed of as a rival to Signor Salieri, was spoken of as a prodigious child, who had failed fully to justify the promise of his infancy. Mademoiselle Martinetz was the great amateur singer. Metastasio gave laws to taste, being by many (Burney and himself among the number) reputed to be not merely the elegant opera-song writer that we still think him, but the great dramatist of his age. There were still to be heard in St. Stephen's masses by Colonna, Handel's model, and other of the old Italians.—Music was then, in short, in its youth, with not half of its faculties developed, or its tendencies suspected.

On the greater period which closed the past and opened the present century—when Vienna was successively influenced by Haydn in his elder years, by Mozart in his prime, by Beethoven during his long life, by Rossini as a passing stranger, and which ended, so far as creation goes, with the death of Schubert in 1821—there is no need here to dwell for the purpose of illustrating my remark, and working out my comparison. Since then, we have been able pretty minutely to know and to follow the course of

musical creation in the Austrian capital without fear of any very remarkable manifestation there being overlooked.

It is now no longer with Music as it was in Burney's time, when publication hardly existed —when intercourse was rare—when the *dilettante* had to be handed from ambassador to ambassador in search of the masters of Music, most of whom were chiefly to be found in princely ante-chambers. No war has interposed to barricade frontiers, or to keep precious manuscripts under home lock and key. There is little modern German music of which a specimen has not found its way to persons on the alert in other countries.—For whom, then, and for what, would any pilgrim in search of creative genius, rather than of executive skill, have found it worth his while to shape his course to Vienna during the last twenty years?—Such a question could receive only one answer. The *rationale* of the all but utter blank disclosed, is pregnant with interest. Few more interesting subjects of speculation in art exist, than the history of Music in Austria; and the perpetual strife which it would reveal, betwixt a joyous, genial, abundant, natural life and power, upspringing in the people — and the enervating

influences of a state of society in which every intellectual tendency has been, on system, suppressed, killed, corrupted by bad government. That the three greatest men who have adorned modern German instrumental music, selected Vienna for their abiding city, says much for its charms as a residence for the musician, when it is recollected that two—Mozart and Beethoven—conceived themselves (and not unjustly) to be there denied those honours of fame and fortune, which they might have claimed, and did receive, in other places. There is no trace of any Austrian sovereign bestowing as much appreciating patronage and lively interest on his best musician, as Frederic the Great, in the Prussian metropolis, bestowed on his flute master, his opera-singers, and the composer who set his scores in order. Mozart was put off by his "good Emperor" with South German jokes and sweet words;—Beethoven was forsaken for Rossini and "Chinese porcelain;"—Schubert was ill remunerated, and little known in his life-time beyond the homely circle of his own intimates; "Fidelio," when it was first represented, was a thorough and disheartening failure; "Euryanthe" (the last new German opera of any value, pro-

duced at Vienna) was, in the emptiness of vapid Austrian wit, called "L'Ennuyante." Great executant players—such as Liszt, Thalberg, Ernst—have of late days excited the utmost enthusiasm there; but the great German composers of modern times have, with the exception of Meyerbeer, visited the Austrian capital rarely, and given out nothing thence. How this can have come to pass, with a people notoriously so eager after amusement, so passionate in love of music, so hospitable to strangers, and so liberal to artists, the pilgrim who sees in Vienna what I saw, and who believes that art, manners, and opinion, are all open to certain good or evil influences, may possibly divine. The history of government and of morals in Austria may one day be written, and will throw some light on the curious extinction of "the spark divine"—more sudden and complete even than can be explained on the theory that every art must have its periods of decay and exhaustion to succeed its cycles of prosperity and plenty, as well as every nation.

CHAPTER II.

DOWN THE DANUBE.

Picturesque journey — Up the Main from Frankfort — Main scenery — Halt at Miltenberg — The King of Bavaria's birthday — A word about Ratisbon — The Danube more picturesque than the Rhine — Scenery ampler and more various — Greater variety in *costume* — Primitive steamer — Passau — Drawing of a lottery — Linz — Visit to St. Florian's — The organ at St. Florian's — Mölk — Prandauer the architect — Inhabitants of the palace-monastery — The organ at Mölk — A word about the *Abbé* Stadler — Crazy mineralogist — Down to Nussdorf.

It may be said that the very turn of mind which induced the speculations of the foregoing chapter, and the very adjournment of my visit to Vienna, till I had seen most of the other German capitals, render me an unfair witness. Yet, laying aside questions of high Art, and not dwelling on other determining causes of personal interest, I may truly say that I never set forth towards any place with greater expectations of pleasure, than those which accompanied me in

the long vacation of 1844, when, leaving the noise of that great inn Frankfort behind, we turned up the Main, making a four days' journey by steamer to Würzburg; thence to Nuremburg —and, after two days' halt there, to the Danube at Ratisbon.

A more delicious route is not to be traced. The Main, more placid in its scenery than the Lahn or the Moselle, or that curious volcanic mountain-brook, the Ahr, is still rich in variety, —with many a delicious town and valley nook, in which one could dream whole summer weeks away; and a staple of rich, flowery, pastoral meadow-scenery on its banks, distinguishing it among the tributaries of the Rhine.—The people of the district, in 1844, seemed cheerful and simple, having names that reminded one of the "Pilgrim's Progress" — *Hailsieve*, *Bubble-wine*, and others of the kind. At the charming old village-town of Miltenberg, where we halted, we had the good luck of coming in for the celebration of the King's birthday, which was kept by a little concert of the *Sing-verein*—the presentation to the same association of a banner worked by the ladies of Miltenberg, with a speech delivered by a damsel with trembling

enthusiasm,—lastly, a ball, at which the passing strangers, no matter whether knight or squire, got all the best partners ; and after which, those who were young and civil could, the next day, show pansies and other token-flowers, to be kept religiously till the next festive occasion, and the next sentimental parting.—It seems to me now, as if I could write a book on the pleasures and pictures of that Main journey, and a library on the goodly things of Nuremburg—that gem of the old cities of Germany—which those who relish it once, must relish more and more on every subsequent return, so exquisitely rich is it in character, no less than in detail.

Then who will not be seized by the contrast which exists betwixt such a stately, opulent city, still clad, as it were, in all its gorgeous embroideries, little frayed or corroded by Time, and such a fierce, grim, gloomy place as Ratisbon !—a city which looks as though it had been pierced through and through by the sword; and scorched or scathed by the fires of War ; the streets of which are made menacing with towers, and where the Town-House still contains complete all its ghastly appurtenances of rack, thumbscrew, and other implements of torture.

The Cathedral at Ratisbon, too (its cloister pavement rough with the effigies of prelates and ecclesiastical princes), has in this wealth of monuments a character of power, not discordant with the stern, warlike, and cruel features of the place. And by the town runs that violent, capricious, rapid stream the Danube, the picturesque features of which are as yet utterly unexhausted, and dimly understood — at least by English travellers.

No days of my life have left a stronger impression of vivid pleasure on my mind than my days spent on this river betwixt Ratisbon and Vienna. It is not merely that the objects are more remote, less pawed and profaned by vacancy fancying itself admiration, than the familiar features of the Rhine. They are on a grander scale—more various:—the river runs along a plain, and not in a trough as the Rhine may be said to do betwixt Bingen and the Seven Mountains. As we go down from Ratisbon, on the left bank, hill above hill rises at a respectful distance from the stream, till Nattern-berg is past; after which point Tyrolese cottages begin to peep out among the sombre pine woods. Our steamer was an odd, uncouth

boat, with ropes for chains, and wood for fuel. Every peasant that stepped on board was a figure to paint. There were stalwart men, in comfortable blue coats, long Hessian boots, and black leather breeches, with travelling knife and fork sticking out;—linen merchants, looking more like Chinese or Tartars than Christian folk; clad in white fringed linen, with white blankets threaded with fine colours flung over their shoulders, who sat on their bales of linen, as brown, bright-eyed, sagacious, and still, as so many mastiffs; loutish jockeys going down to Passau to ride a race, who played ferociously at *spadi* with a pack of dirty and unintelligible cards all the way; a grand bearded captain and conducteur, who spoke strange dialects—Magyar, Illyrian, how could we know?—and who only wanted turban, caftan, and sash, to fulfil the child's notion of Oriental kings. In looking at these novelties, pleasantly slipped away the half-day betwixt Ratisbon and Passau—the Coblentz of the Danube; and more picturesque than Coblentz by one stream.—Passau, again, was full of picture, with its *Volks'fest*, which included a horse-race, and (well-a-day for the innocence of the peasantry under paternal government!)

the drawing of a lottery. I was sitting in the sun on the hill above *Mariâ Hilf* enjoying the splendid view, the morning after our arrival, when the news of this wholesome popular pastime was brought up by a roll of drums and a flourish of trumpets, as each new prize was proclaimed. Coming down, we met a peasant woman of the lowest class, embracing, like a baby, her prize—and what a prize! It was a clock;—no sober-going useful creature, but a gay French *pendule*, with four black marble pillars and a pediment, and a *Troubadour* with his guitar or *Sappho* and her lyre, sitting a-top. And there its winner stood a proud woman, the centre of a little crowd. An old fruit-wife, as brown and wrinkled as a walnut, left her apples, pears, and cakes, in the shadow of the gate, to get up and sympathize. Around the triumphant creature stood wondering children on tiptoe, regarding the prize.

Thus, they thought, must angels shine,

while even two big Bavarian soldiers, ferociously moustached, condescended to loiter and lift up their huge gauntletted hands in admiration of the treasure.—The scene was full of gaiety and character. The moralities of it came after.

One peculiarity which distinguishes the Danube from the Rhine, is the presence of grand palace-monasteries. There was no passing these. We halted at Linz, to visit St. Florian's, and again at Mölk, to pay our vows at the organ of the splendid and fantastic-looking pile that hangs over the stream.

The special grace of *St. Florian* was his gift of extinguishing fires; and in the great square at Linz, stands an effigy of the holy person, wearing a sort of *Amadis* dress of casque and fluttering kilt, pointing a shapely leg with minuet grace, and holding in his hand a machine like a Bavarian beer-glass, from which a stone stream of water is always descending on a small polygonal building under his saintly care. Arcadian, however, as is his statue, his stronghold, some seven miles from Linz, is a more princely palace than one could fancy ever builded to any *St. James Jessamy*, even by Austrian sensuality, superstition, and earnest good faith combined.

For a few miles the road from Linz to St. Florian's is the post-road to Vienna. At Eversberg, we crossed the Traun, a sea-green mountain-stream, arrow-swift and ill to guide.

There a friendly guide-post warned us to turn aside, and thence the path becomes narrower and more rural; leading upward into as fair a district as this world has to show. The road ascends slowly among thickets rather than woods; betwixt sloping banks gay with strange flowers; and here and there, these recede and make place for meadows, where huge white bullocks were grazing—bordered plenteously by apple, cherry, pear, and plum trees undecayed and in full bearing. The one or two peasants we met were unusually sleek and civil. As we drove on, on one side were revealed splendid openings of the hills of the *Wienerwald;* and far and blue in the distance on the other, rose the Salzburg Alps. At length, after mounting a bare sweep of arable land, and turning the corner of a close, thriving wood, the palace came into view—a gorgeous building in the Italian style, reared for the Austrian *clerici* in the reign of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, by Architect Prandauer of St. Pölten, the Palladio of Austria.

Passing the Convent dispensary, and a range of stables immense enough, like the Foscari palace at Venice, to lodge the train of three kings at once, the pilgrim enters by a decorated portal

into a hall, and thence by a sumptuous double staircase into corridors paved with marble, stretching away in long perspective; the ceilings floridly and boldly *stuccoed*, and the doors of the cells—kings' chambers rather!—of the richest walnut-wood with solid brass locks. The *custos* —more of a gentleman's *Scapin*, than a mortified lay brother—with an embroidered *chemise*, spotlessly clean, and a magnificent seal ring, did the honours most courteously. We must first see the refectory, a lofty room with marble pillars, a painted ceiling, and huge ovals of porphyry supported by grouped cupids (not cherubs) for sideboards. From the window the eye travelled over orchards and meadows and woods full of game, and square, pellucid fish ponds, and gardens rich with vegetables—all *St. Florian's* property—so that there was no fear of banquet being wanting conformable with banquet room. Thence we passed into one fine chamber after another, containing a rubbishy collection of pictures; some among them oddly anacreontic (but that is almost canonical)—one calling itself a Van Eyck; and a very ancient series, belonging to an older building on the same site, which is devoted to *St. Florian's* deeds and sufferings.

Our poor *custos* yawned sadly as he led us along.—Not a fig for the pictures cared he—as little for the view without; and, to a warm expression of admiration, replied "that he had had enough of the place." He warmed up a little among the collections of natural history. We must be surprised by the white cuckoo, and the white starling, and the white finch; and be expressly delighted with his pet lion — a landscape hung against the wall, and done entirely in a mosaic of butterflies' wings.—This had been the work of one of the *Chorherren* (or Fellows) of St. Florian's, and had cost its artificer only four years!

The chapel was more to our taste; and here I could honestly express amazement at its magnificence; since, though much is left in white wood and stucco which was intended should be gilt and painted, the stalls of the choir are of richly-inlaid walnut-wood, and the two organ galleries in the choir are among the richest specimens of carving I had then ever seen.—Above the grand entrance stands the third or grand organ, which is only used on high festivals, and seemed set great store by. It is reputed to be one of Father Chrismann's master-works, sur-

passing even the better known instrument at Mölk, in extent and quality—with three ranks of keys, and a pedal-board, fifty-nine stops, and 5,230 pipes. Rich, sweet, and brilliant, in no ordinary degree, the tone seemed to be, so far as I could judge; but, as usual, the organist was away, and the organ out of tune; and weak amateur hands, with two feet, that (when any one is near) alight oftener wrong than right, make but indifferent acquaintance with these leviathans. I could not hear that any of the gentlemen of the monastery solaced himself much with music.

Our *custos*, however, was musical, we found: since, charmed by the rare chance of having guests to talk with, and who admired and envied the comfortable shelter of his retreat, he insisted on our seeing his room. Many a nobleman's son in our colleges would be thankful to be half as amply lodged as he. Sheets of music were lying about, —a fiddle, and a pair of drum-sticks. His favourite amusement, he said, was drumming; and, among these was laid out the last finish to his dinner, a downy peach, and a melting red plum, arranged on a Linz play-bill. But the wanton fellow owned to have had enough of fine

scenery, and royal lodging, and pleasant fare, and dainty clothing. "No one," he assured us, "would stay at St. Florian's longer than he could possibly help." It was strange, from such a scene of cheerful luxury, to take away such an impression of *idlesse* and *ennui*. Holiness seemed neither to be seen nor to be heard of—however gaily it might be exhibited, like Father Chrismann's grand organ, on *St. Florian's* day, the fourth of May, and other high festival days.

We made a second halt at Mölk, having a hankering after these grand Austrian monasteries, with their grand organs; and in those days, something like a hope that we might there light on some such retired enthusiast as an art-novelist would love to establish in such places —one cherishing a purer music in his life and thoughts and fingers, than can be originated or retained by those who ruffle it in the world for honours and appointments. But no such musical recluses have I ever found: once or twice, peevishness and pedantry in obscurity, fancying themselves power in eclipse—but never, alas! that serene spiritual existence of which it is so delightful to dream.—Painting may possibly flourish better with but one gazer for the pic-

ture, in the artist—than Music, with no audience, except it be the musician.

To return—betwixt Linz and Mölk comes the grandest scenery of the Danube above Vienna. As the boat sweeps down to Mauthausen, the Alps rise on the horizon: we saw them glistening white with snow against the deep sky. Then comes the picturesque Schloss Nieder Walsee; and lower down, and further from the shore, the castle of Clam Martinetz rising proudly among the woods. Next, appear the Strüdel and the Wirbel. You have hardly admired Grein, which stands lovesomely at a bend of the river—a tempting-looking white village, with that mixture of foliage among houses that is so largely missed on the Rhine—when a whirl of the narrowed current sweeps you down among rocks which the King of the *Kobolds* must have shaped to show his wondrous adroitness—with here a chapel, and there a crucifix, and anon a tower—I know not in what order coming.—For the power of the water and the power of steam acting in concert, make up a sensation akin to that delicious dream of flying, which every one has enjoyed when a child. The boat seems hardly a hair's breadth from the rocky barrier,—abso-

lutely grazing the very tower and trees which fringe it—when another *twist* of the roaring waters flings you into the midst of a cauldron yet more wrathful, yet more picturesquely bordered; and then the boat—be she even as robust of frame as was our *Mariana*—pauses and staggers as if about to yield, and another sweep of the torrent seizes her. You look into the writhing, boiling whirlpool:—there are shrieks of sailors, outcries of amazement from every stranger and pilgrim,—and it is over;—and the *Mariana* is making her swift and steady way down the Danube, just as if she had not been in "the Devil's Grip." After those seconds of excitement, amounting to positive rapture, I could look at nothing more till the ruin of Weideneck came in sight, and with it the palace of Mölk.

This palace at Mölk is another of Architect Prandauer's buildings. He seems to have contented himself with making the most of the one or two magnificent points which the site presented, and leaving the rest of his work without an idea. The bastion-like *facade* of the monastery abutting on the front of the perpendicular rock, close above the stream, is ingenious, in right of the grace with which a screen,

sweeping the very verge of the precipice with a graceful oval, connects the two wings of the building; while its central arch or portal admits a fair view of the gorgeous church behind it. The remainder of the pile, however imposing because of its extent, does not get beyond a hospital or barrack in architectural style or expression.

The *Mariana* flung us out at the "Ox," almost the poorest inn in Germany at which I ever harboured. However, the landlord was smiling and jolly, had three beautiful children and a huge sociable dog, and a garden-room or pavilion commanding the stream, redolent enough of stable,—but where one could dine with open windows. Then for dinner, besides the national fried chicken of the South, we were treated to trout sweet as May-dew, Erlauer wine (for we were now within reach of Hungarian drinks), and a basket of peaches; which, though marvellously like so many balls of pink and green flannel, gave an air to the banquet.

Till every one of the holy household had eaten, drank, and slept, it would have been useless to go up and knock at the monastery-gate. We should not first have seen St. Florian's:

since that building is richer and grander; while the very position of Mölk, on the edge of one of Europe's grand highways, is calculated to disturb the ideas of seclusion, whether sensual or scholastic, which belong to one of these retreats from the world. Here, besides the *custos*, we fell in with one of the Fellows of the establishment, who was right glad to come down at the evening to the "Ox," and to sit in the tobacco-smoke, and to drink his beer, while he talked war and peace (this was in 1844), and as much about the policy of *Sir Peel*, as an Austrian could be expected to know. He, too, like the *custos* of St. Florian's, revealed lazy dissatisfaction at the manner in which cloister-life went on. It was difficult, he assured us, to keep up the numbers in this luxurious place—though the scholar finds there a renowned and ample library, and the musician another gorgeous organ. The rule, too, in 1844, was something beyond liberty itself. Another of these spoiled children of the Church steamed down with us to Vienna on the following day, having laid aside his clerical garb, "because," he said, "he could not talk to the girls in it"—and for reading, this gay person had no breviary

book, but a translation of "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

While we were waiting for the schoolmaster, who had the key of the organ, in the absence of the Reverend to whom music at Mölk was entrusted, we strolled into the monastery garden. What a paradise was this of dainty devices and luscious fruits!—of pear-trees clipped into pyramids, with flushed bacchanal-looking fruit pushing out their cheeks among the glossy leaves. What a wall was that thatched with loaded fig-trees!—The hot-house, it is true, was filled with onions, where there should have been pine-apples;—but the ground round the espaliers, was carpeted with mignionette and *coreopsis*, and an open door, which introduced us into a tank full of gold fish, fringed by tall walnut-trees, was sentinelled by some of the finest *daturas* and *dahlias* I ever saw. Never were precincts in themselves more teeming, more bounteously cheerful.—Yet the sleep of lethargy, not to say decrepitude, seemed to be over the place.

The schoolmaster is, of course, a person not to be trifled with. When he has to show off his lion to an English *Crœsus*, he will make the

latter, by right prescriptive, wait as long as if he had anything really to do. He must sleep off his dinner and his beer; and he has the ceremony to go through of making some show of clean linen. But this man at Mölk was the most tardy and Beotian of his class I ever met with.

As a player, he could do no more than just exhibit the forty stops of his glorious instrument—about which he seemed to know or to care equally little. He could not tell us what manner of music was executed at Mölk—whether any of the *Chorherren* ever played for their own recreation;—he was not sure whether Herr Staudigl the *basso* had, or had not (as has been said), "once on a time," belonged to the monastery.—A more heavy, uninteresting being could not be imagined; and supposing him in the least to be a type of his class, Music must be all but dead-asleep in those gilded caves of *Trophonius*—the palace-monasteries of Austria.

It was not so some ninety years since, when the *Abbé* Stadler, born at Mölk in 1748, and passed thence to the Abbey of Lilienfeld as a choir boy, early acquired (beside a professor's

knowledge in theology sufficient for a Jesuit seminary) such skill on the organ and piano, as to attract the notice of the Emperor Joseph the Second, who made him successively Abbot of Lilienfeld and Abbot of Kremsmünster. In those high places, Abbot Stadler's masterly organ-playing and skill in composition, gave him a rank among the great *virtuosi* of Austria —though Burney seems to have missed him on his voyage.* On his subsequent removal to Vienna, he became the personal intimate of Haydn and Mozart—and very late in life, undertook to break a lance with Godfrey Weber, in defence of Mozart's much canvassed "Requiem." Parts of the Abbot Stadler's "Jerusalem Delivered," an Oratorio composed by him in his sixtieth year, and some of his motetts and instrumental compositions, made their way to England, when England was less on the alert than it has since become, with regard to foreign music.—It is hazarding little, I apprehend, to assert that no such worthies as the Abbot Stadler were being bred, or

* When Dr. Burney went down the Danube, however, the organs at Passau and Krems arrested his attention, beside the part-singing of the peasantry heard on the bank of the rivers.

finding Emperors to attend to them, among the monasteries of the Danube, in 1844.

Such wakefulness as there might then exist at Mölk was of another kind. The Abbot was a redoubtable mineralogist. We did not ask to see his collections, not understanding the subject; but we fell upon one of his familiars —a quarry-man, the *Sam Weller* of the country-side—and for threadbare-garments, debt, and sociability, its *Richard Swiveller* also. He, too, came down to the "Ox," for his gossip, his beer, and his public—well nigh as fantastic as *Edgar's* self in his rags: which were an old jacket of the gayest cotton, now shrunk and stained and patched; a battered sugar-loaf hat of straw, stuck round with sprigs of *geum* and barberry-clusters, a Tyrolese cockade of bristles and a feather.—Up and down the yard and the *stube*, he hopped on his poor old withered bare feet, with the gait and shrewdness of a lame raven,—telling queer stories, singing heterodox songs, and dancing unlicensed polkas. He had a handkerchief full of gunpowder ready for some blast, which he flourished about so dangerously near the cigar one of us gave him, that landlord,

boots, and a passing bagman, who chanced to be nooning at the "Ox," had to plot how to get it out of such random keeping. They told us, that while he was quarrying, this original had, one morning, found a treasure of old coins; whereupon he had bought a couple of cows, and had announced free beef and beer to the village, till all his money should be spent!—Yet he was well accredited as an acute and experienced miner; and talked sensibly enough, when "the bee" could be got out of his bonnet: which, however, was only one minute out of ten. During the other nine, his great desire appeared to be to treat everyone to beer, and to get some person else to pay for it—and I grieve to add that, on his second visit to us at the "Ox," the poor, wrinkled old scaramouch, had drunk so much ere he arrived, as to fall into sad disgrace, and ignominiously to be driven out.

What became of him ultimately, it is not possible to tell—since, shortly after the animated scene of his expulsion, we were "picked off" this curious place of sojourn, by another of the rapid Danube steamers,

with its picturesque crew and company; and early in the same day, reached Nussdorf—the landing-place for the Austrian capital.

CHAPTER III.

AUTUMN MUSIC AND DANCING.

Operas at the *Kärnther Thor* Theatre—The singers—The orchestra—German appreciation of executive talent—Herr Mayseder's playing—His music—Herr Strauss—Coarse scene at the *Sperl*—The exquisite music of Strauss—His capital conducting—A few words on the wild and the trained dance-music of Southern Germany.

THE serious music which I heard at Vienna, though all belonging to a past period—and none marking progress or creative activity in the capital—was neither poor nor unimportant. To begin with opera—at the *Kärnther Thor* Theatre, during my visit, the following works were performed : — "Jessonda," "Fidelio," "Don Juan," "Guillaume Tell," "Les Huguenots," —and performed, too, by a company of artists more than ordinarily efficient and accomplished, for Germany.

Madame Van Hasselt Barth, and Madame

Stöckl Heinefetter, were the *prime donne*. The former lady had a vocal purity—if not very extraordinary range of vocal execution,—united with German musical enthusiasm, which I have rarely met in other ladies of her country. Her voice was clear, elastic, and perfectly in tune. If not a very interesting, she was a most classical *Donna Anna*—an effective *Valentine*, too, in Meyerbeer's opera; and she has left on my mind the impression of a truly satisfactory singer. When on the stage with her as *Donna Elvira*, Madame Stöckl Heinefetter curbed the untutored force of her stupendous *soprano* voice, and thus seemed, by many degrees, more like an artist than she did when, in "Fidelio," she sang the first part—and raged through Beethoven's passionate music, like a *sesquialtera* stop in an organ, doing its very loudest. The name of the *Zerlina* in "Don Juan," and of the *Marcellina* in "Fidelio," I have forgotten, from which it is fair to fancy that the lady must have been innocuous, if not very arch and winning. I remember the "executant songstress," in "Les Huguenots" by her bulk. At Vienna, all "church matters" were taken out of Meyerbeer's opera. It was there

transmogrified into a Guelph and Ghibelline story:—but the gentlewoman who represented the *Queen Marguerite* of the French version, was the fattest gentlewoman whom I ever saw sit or heard sing; and the florid music of her *sortita* was forced out with a wheezy smothered sound, at once absurd and painful. The Abyssinian proportions, however, of Madame Granichstetten-Vial, appeared to cause neither dismay nor discomfort to her audience. In those days (I know not what Revolution may have since effected) slimness, and the show or the sound of youth, seemed utterly disregarded on the German stage. I saw the great scenes of "Wallenstein," played through at the *Burg Theater*, by a *Friedland*, a *Max*, a *Thekla*, and a *troupe* of playfellows (Madame Rettich, as *Countess Tertsky*, making the exception) whose obesity gave to their motions and groups an odd air of elephants in conversation—of ships lumbering towards each other in a calm.

The tenor of the *Kärnther Thor* theatre, when I visited it, was Herr Erl,—not a powerful singer, but an agreeable one, because his voice was less throaty and nasal than the voice which for the most part appears to be thought ex-

pressive and dramatic by German tenors. The basses were Herren Staudigl, Draxler, and others. —Generally, indeed, the tone both of *solo* voices and chorus, appeared to me better produced in Vienna than in other German towns,—as if the circumstance of Italian opera having retained its stronghold as an established entertainment in the Austrian capital, long after it had perished in Munich, Dresden, and Berlin, had insensibly influenced the vocal taste and studies of the artists there.—The orchestra was a fine one, and played with due intelligence,—but slackly. The operas, though not prepared with any extraordinary nicety, were perfectly known; but this, indeed, is the rule throughout Germany, north and south. Let the singers be ever so vocally raw or unrefined, — let them strain their throats till every vein resembles a bamboo cane,—let them bring out their notes, from under the eye-brows, or down the nostril, or out of the ear,—if a shake is written, something for a shake will be presented—if a *roulade*, the voice will be dragged up and down the ladder,—if a note above the everyday compass be called for, the note must come—even though the hearer, distressed at the sound of its coming,

expects that the next cry will be the cry for a surgeon to the victim of zeal without knowledge!

It would not be uninstructive to consider how far the vitiation and neglect of one of the most captivating materials of musical execution, may be ascribed to the symphonic writers, who have not admitted that the *solo* voice, having the text to deliver, should be considered in a different light to an instrument among instruments — how far it may be charged to the confusion of style caused by the necessity under which German opera-singers stand, of getting through French, Italian, and (of late) English music besides their own, native works,—how far to a national want of ear for the charm of vocal tone. But the hearing of evidence in this matter would bring us into the midst of the great quarrel betwixt schools and countries, which has raged so fiercely in Music, and place us, moreover, face to face with the transcendentalists, whose notions of Art are not to be briefly dismissed, because they are not clearly defined. The heads of such an inquiry being stated, it may be left for the lovers of Mozart, and the believers in Wagner, to enter upon at their pleasure.—It is enough for me here to state that I found the evil of

German vocal imperfection in its most mitigated form at Vienna. Whether the flimsy school of composers who have since reigned there, such as MM. Flotow, Balfe, Proch, Kucken, and Van Hoven, have done anything to ameliorate or further to exasperate the evil, so far as Austria is concerned—I am little able to say. Some idea, perhaps, of the present state of vocal art in Vienna may be formed, by comparing Mademoiselle Zerr (who is the most modern Viennese singer that has visited England) with Madame Persiani, Madame Sontag, Madame Cinti Damoreau, or our own Miss Louisa Pyne, — all of them singers, in style of voice and occupation, fit subjects of comparison with her. Let us leave such delicate matters.

Among the special musical attractions which Vienna possessed in 1844 (and happily still possesses in 1852) was the violin-playing of Herr Mayseder. This was a pleasure all the more choice because it has been rarely, if ever heard, except in the Austrian capital. In the joint character of *virtuoso* and composer, Herr Mayseder might have delighted Europe, as a Viotti and a De Beriot have done, with the fascination of a talent as elegant as it is indi-

vidual: had he not preferred that easier part and easier life of Art which belong to residence in a chosen place, among a chosen circle, to a wider chase of those dreams of rivalry, profit, and glory, which are rarely fulfilled, without a sufficient number of thorns being found in the crown. When I was in Vienna this exquisite artist might be heard playing a *solo* every night when a *ballet* was transacted by the elderly and bony crew, who in 1844 figured as Nymphs, Beauties, Graces, and Muses, at the *Kärnther Thor* Opera House. There was no great stimulus at such a time of year, and with such forms and gesticulations on the stage to accompany, for a *virtuoso* to play his best. No one except a German would have played carefully, even—or, perhaps, at all—under such circumstances. Yet those *solos* by Herr Mayseder are among the best exhibitions of their kind, that I ever enjoyed. The ease, the precision of accent—totally distinct from French piquancy or Italian intensity—the gamesome and delicate grace, and the sufficient exhibition of the violin thrown into them, were as delightful as the pleasantest scene in one of M. Auber's operas, or the most finely-finished and fantastically-decorated *aria* sung by a Cinti

Damoreau or a Sontag. The same attraction as belongs to high breeding, select and well-fancied diction, sweetness of voice and kind courtesy of demeanour in society (and who can resist them ?) attaches itself to music of this quality. And, as in the world, after our having on trust endured much violence and uncouthness, because they demand our admiration as signs of Genius, such amenities of manner become doubly welcome—so also in the study of Art, there comes a time at which the power of ugliness to charm, of emptiness to seem profound, and of that which is unintelligible to pass for idea, ends—and at which suavity, form, taste, and polish, acquire a value from the contrast, which they did not possess in our more credulous days of youthful high spirits and inexperienced faith.

How curious is it to observe that the *fear* of beauty has for the moment possessed one section of the world of lovers and students of Music, as completely as the *love* of beauty did in former years !—This, however, may be an inevitable disease through which at a certain stage all art must pass ; and it remains for those who regard the visitation alike without dismay, or without much expectation of its immediate close, to set

forth and illustrate the folly as clearly and emphatically as they can. A school of painters who commenced with the resolution of getting rid both of form and colour, would start on canons quite as wise, as the school of so-called pioneers and discoverers, who are desirous of adding to the stores of Music, by the destruction of rhythm, melody, and executive brilliancy; and who would replace gifts and graces, which they contemptuously denounce as the "pleasures of sense," by the screams and spasms of nonsense, calling itself deep meaning.

To return to Herr Mayseder,—a historian of German violin-playing, or a lecturer on style in Music, might find it interesting and profitable to take him as the German point of departure for a comparison betwixt the spirit of the South, and the spirit of the North, in Music. The popular polish and brilliancy, not excluding grandeur in execution, which has been long ascribed to the Vienna players as a characteristic (and of which we have so perfect an example in Herr Thalberg), is not altogether an affair of mode, depending on the patronage of a Thun, Kinsky, Esterhazy, Metternich, or other noble amateur. It is like the vocal dispositions of the Italians, and the rhyth-

mical propensities of the French—an affair of organization. North Germany has not produced anything so warm, so impassioned, and withal so elegant, in executive music, as the violin-playing of Herr Ernst. The excellent solidity, intellectual pertinence, and masterly completeness of its artists as a group, distinguish them, in turn, no less honourably. But if we have power in the North, must we not go for beauty towards the South?—This, however, is a question to be asked, not an assertion to be made,—since, strangely enough, the farther North, in its Thorwaldsen, Lindblad, Andersen, Lind, Taglioni, has of late years been contributing a gift of art and of artists to the world, in which the charm has been more remarkable than the power, and the elegance than the expression.

But if we begin with speculation and comparison we may lose ourselves, not merely among the *auroras* and ice-wildernesses of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, but in that more universal land of fog and mist, from which pilgrims issue forth (if they ever do leave it) chilled and bewildered, rather than edified.—Once again, therefore, let us return to Herr Mayseder. Whatever be his place as a player, or his value as

a specimen or an illustration, it seems to me that he has not been sufficiently valued as a writer. No one would dream of comparing his violin *solos* with those of Dr. Spohr, or of Herr Molique, in point of solid composition. He has not the richness and continuity of symphonic resource which distinguish the author of "Faust" and "Jessonda." He is less quaintly clever than the capital concert-master from Stuttgart. Yet Herr Mayseder's *solos* must not be scorned as shallow—while they display an elegance and felicity of melody—graceful or grandiose, as may be required—which are not found in the violin music of the *Kapellmeister* of Cassel, his *duetts* for two violins excepted. Hackneyed as were Herr Mayseder's compositions some five and twenty years since, they still make part of the first-class violinist's repertory. There is nothing for the instrument fresher and more effective than his airs with variations, *Polonoises*, and *Rondos*. The themes of most of these have a style and a spirit, and the passages a natural and genial brilliancy, that raise them far above the worthless efforts of those who string together a few extravagant phrases, to exhibit such individual powers over the bow and strings

as they may have mastered.—Again, there is chamber-music by Herr Mayseder,—as for instance, his first and second pianoforte *Trios*, and his pianoforte *Sonatas* with violin in E flat major, and in E minor,—which is worthier, of its showy order, than most other music of the kind in existence. The works just named may be resorted to not only long after similar essays by Kalkbrenner, Pixis, and others, are forgotten—but they will outlive the oppressive pianoforte *Trios* and Duetts which Taubert and Lachner,—nay, even Spohr,—have deposited in the midst of the world of serious players, with as much solemnity and circumstance as if they contained fresh ideas and forms.—It should be remembered, lastly, that Herr Mayseder is a quartett player of the first class—trained under a *Gamaliel* no less eminent than the Herr Schuppanzigh by whom Beethoven's best quartetts were prepared and performed in Beethoven's presence. Of Herr Mayseder's quartett-playing, however (which of late years, has been restricted to a few private circles), I can only speak by report. The *solo* performances I heard, spoke too clearly to be misunderstood—warranting for him every good quality which taste, intelligence, sensitive-

ness of phrasing, and discretion in *tempo*, could bring to bear on classical music.

Another of the real delights of Vienna, was to hear Strauss setting his own public in motion.—It is true that I partook of this under heavy disadvantages. The ball at the *Sperl*, where I first found the Waltz-master at home, threw a light on the much admired popular gaieties of the Austrian capital, more powerful than pleasing.—There was good company at this ball; burgher family-parties of fathers and mothers—sons and daughters—a few persons of higher rank,—with several of those mournful groups of travelling English, who seem to have that fear of amusing themselves generally ascribed to us by Madame —— in the fulness of her *spirituel* spleen, because we would not accept her tortured reading of Beethoven's *adagios*.—Nor was Respectability afraid of dancing—since hardly had the "*Rosen ohne Dornen*" (then a novelty) struck up, before more than one head of a family, as well as youth and maid, was seen busily jigging round in that *two-in-a-bar* step, by which modern whim has agreed to dislocate and vulgarize the grace of the most graceful among all dancing mea-

sures. But in this not discreditable society, and at an early hour of the revels, the attraction of the night became not the new waltz—not the *Rebus*, with its hieroglyphics put forth by the Waltz-master, the guessing of which was to add to the pleasures of the entertainment—not even the supper-tables, though these were steadily beset, and solidly honoured—but the proceedings of a damsel, which, to say the least, were more Bacchanal than courtly.—Her dirty dress of blue crape was ripped and ragged, imperfectly clasped at the waist, and clinging with a desperate tightness below the shoulder—her hair in front plastered tightly on her forehead in an arch of little flat fish-hook curls, was carelessly twisted up behind, with a loose tail streaming on her coarse neck. Her cheek was red with something deeper than even the rouge, so profusely used by the Viennese ladies. Her voice was hoarse, her gestures were rudely violent as she dragged her partner round the circle in a style which with us would have cleared the ball-room—which in Paris, would have been presently moderated by the presence of a *sergent de police*. At the *Sperl*, her effronteries of aspect and behaviour seemed to be acceptable

rather than the reverse. Matrons and maids kept their place in the circle that surrounded the waltzers, just as if the most edifying of spectacles had been in process of gyration; and the men on whose arms they leaned—fathers and brothers—not sprightly young men who endure no such domestic incumbrances—not passing English boys, who plunge into everything that comes before them, fancying that "such is life"—these good family citizens of Vienna, I say, absolutely applauded this hardened creature as she rushed round;—their plaudits exciting her to fresh audacity, fresh frenzy, fresh exhibitions of demeanour for the instruction of their own "womenkind!"—The bad impression which this, my first taste of the far-famed gaiety of the light-hearted Viennese left on me, never utterly faded out of me, so long as I remained in the city. It was impossible to accept the exhibition as one wholly exceptional, or got up as an extra-relish for enterprising strangers.

Nevertheless,—hideous as was such a dance as this, and more hideous the heartiness with which it was accredited by the men, and the indifference with which it was beheld by the

women,—there was in the music, that strange mixture of pensiveness and inebriating spirit, but faintly represented in the ball-rooms of London and Paris, even by the same Strauss, when directing the same orchestra, and playing the same tunes, which makes me also remember the evening. The exquisite undulation of the triple *tempo* which no French orchestra can render*—full to the utmost fullness, yet not heavy—round and equal, yet still with a slight *propelling* accent —the precision and the pleasure among the players, and the unstudied quiet animation of the Waltz-master himself, made up an irresistible charm,—a case of that fascination by perfect concord, without any apparent mechanical weariness which long practice only can give :—a delicious example of some of the most luscious tones that happy orchestral combination can produce, called out in expression and enhance-

* On the other hand, no German band can play a *galoppe* with that piquancy and precipitancy, that metallic sharpness of accent, and sliding smoothness, which the spirit of that dance demands. These are among the nationalities beyond the power of any training to eradicate—among the niceties of distinction, in examining which, some certain and constant elements of style may be discerned, worth considering by all who care to go deep into the origin of Art.

ment of some of the most beautiful music of modern Europe.

Among the pedantries of musical connoisseurship, few are stranger than the one which will raise its eyebrows at my epithet. Dance-music has been treated by the select, much "as if it had never a soul to be saved"—much as if melody, which depends upon rhythm, were not originally obliged for most of its varieties of form, "to the mirth of feet," as Campion so fancifully called dancing The select are further too apt to forget how the *Giga*, the *Ciaconna*, the *Sarabanda*, the *Menuetto*, the *Polonoise*, the *Bourrèe*, have helped the composer in the days when Fancy was timid. Such an over-refinement, as rejects form, recurrence, and accent in Music, is one among those many indications of a taste only to be gratified by what is remote and excrescent, seeking from one art what another art must yield, which mark the present period. It is true that some of the melodies of Strauss were notoriously adaptations, or else were borrowed without acknowledgment from every source; from operas successful or unsuccessful—from street-ditties and *volkslieder*, dubbed vulgar until they had passed through the alembic and come

forth purified, voluptuously elegant, regally pompous, or sentimentally graceful. But every year's experience of Music, makes one less and less disposed to quarrel with plagiarism, so that the form and manner be not borrowed. We know what magnificent "pickers and stealers" were Handel and Rossini,—and if we are not importuned by the complaint of a tune wrested from its purpose and spoiled (which rarely happens in the waltzes of Strauss)—and if the melody enchants us by the delicious flow of its cadences and the lovely balance of its phrases, there is no need to question or to take exceptions.

Thus much as regards these sensual pleasures —but again, in point of art, there are many works to which the musical student might refer with less advantage, than to the waltzes of Strauss, supposing him to study them with regard to varieties of rhythm and accent. Certain critics, alike shrewd and limited, I am aware, maintain that in rhythm and accent lie our only hopes for future novelty in melody, and point to Herr Meyerbeer as a pioneer and an inventor in this interesting field of discovery. To point out how far I hold them wrong, could not be done

without entering on the whole wide question of musical decay; it is enough to guard against being misunderstood as one who shares empirical opinions, when I dwell on the waltzes of South Germany as containing *a truth* for future musicians to ponder—though *not the whole truth*.—It is admirable to observe in them, how the good effects of monotony are used, not abused—yet withal how large an amount of variety may be ensured, without bewilderment or disappointment for the listener. The manner in which silences, breathing-spaces, and like piquancies, can throw life into a movement, without its becoming fragmentary, might be studied advantageously by the symphonic composer. He might possibly draw thence some means of effect of a meaning and humour entirely opposite to those originated by the ancient masters of counterpoint, in the days when melody was but timidly developed. Besides the *con moto perpetuo* in which (to exemplify) Mendelssohn delighted, there is another and an entirely opposite treatment of climax—another and entirely opposite manner of setting forth idea: and this may be effected without concessions to the indolence of the present day, or to the queer

canon, that vivacity, taste, poetry, preclude the necessity of severe science. To be formless, no less than formal, the artist must not merely know how to think, but must have limitless command over the tones of utterance, and the alphabet of written language. This command comes not of *will*, but of *work*.

Justice to Strauss, as the best, perhaps, of the waltz-composers of South Germany, has yet another plea for its admiration. There is in his works that relish of nationality which must always bear its value, and demand its reward. How I wish that some competent person, some Borrow among the musicians, would write the story of the gipsy (or wild) music of Europe—would give us the birth, parentage, and education of the *patois* songs of Venice and Naples, and the philosophy (to put it primly) of the airs and graces which may be heard in the villages of Bohemia, and in the valleys of the Tyrol, and along the sides of the Styrian lakes. That many of the characteristic peculiarities of these are merely so many *village*-versions of city-tunes imperfectly caught up, and more imperfectly rendered, I have been long satisfied. Careless notation, which forgives *the flat*, or for-

gets to contradict *the sharp*, may engender a national twang. That untrained voices may help on the tune they cannot else get through by howls, twirls, and quaverings, which are utterly unlicensed, though by custom they take a certain queer form of their own, may be gathered by any one familiar with what English psalmody was, in remote country parishes, a quarter of a century since.*—I remember to have been much struck in one of London's by-ways, with a Styrian harper and violin-player, two of the most unkempt creatures that ever trudged through London streets,—playing, what for a while I thought was something curiously quaint and original, and stopped accordingly, to listen to. There were little indescribable twitters and trills, as odd as the chuckle of the Italian *teorbo*—a rhythm that seemed as if it were of seven or thirteen bars —and *such* chords—consecutive fifths and other abominations which I am not worthy to denounce!—I stood, much caught by so wild an

* To venture an illustration in a form of the coarsest extremity—which, however, may "point my meaning" in the direction I wish—has any vigilant London amateur been cool enough to note the curious calamities and changes, which can befall his most favourite Opera tune or English ballad at "the small hours" of a mid winter night, in the hands of "*The Waits?*—"

exhibition—till, as happened to *the Vicar* in the prison, the truth gradually began to dawn on my mind that I had "heard this learning before." One familiar phrase after another disentangled itself, till I made out the *bolero* in the overture to "Preciosa" and the exquisite airy dance (a positive *fountain-burst* of perpetual motion) from the same opera. They came out, both, as good as new—as strange as the strangest *Styrienne* which the travelling collector, if he can, greedily notes down as a specimen of national music.

To pursue my illustration yet a step further, let a born Swiss and a born Venetian sing the same tune—and the one, somehow, shall contrive to give it a smack of the hill-echo, and the other a touch of gondola-undulation, such as shall render the two versions as utterly different as the water at Vevay and at Venice. Let the tune become popular, and the respective *costumes* will so have grown over it, as utterly to disguise its identity.

This national humour, subtle, indescribable, but not to be mistaken by any one that has ever hearkened out for it, gives a peculiar

charm to the music of trained musicians, into which it penetrates. What an individuality radiating from *Mazurka* and *Polonoise*, may be traced in Chopin's music—even when that is the most vaporous, the most languid in its dreaming, the most sensually transcendental, as befitted one whose talent was at once developed and enervated in Paris, that hot-bed of sensual transcendentalism!—What a mixture of voluptuousness and spirit—of the hill-echo and the trumpet-call, and the merry *volkslied* with its burden, is there in the *valses* of the South Germans, when even they condescend to take a popular theme as text for a series of dance tunes!—I was never conscious of a keener pleasure from mere sensation — as distinct from the exercise of intellect, fancy, or enthusiasm—than while listening to these *valses* in Vienna, played lovingly to his loving subjects, by the very Emperor of the national dance.—And well can I believe what has been told me, that the funeral of Strauss, with thousands on thousands of people who followed his bier, and his unstrung violin laid upon the coffin, was as moving a sight as the streets of a great city have often to show;—because more sincere than many

a statelier pageant, where Vanity puts on the weeds of mourning.—It is no great glory to have been a hero among the thoughtless, inane, affectionate populace of Vienna—but Strauss, assuredly, was one in the days before the Revolutions of 1848.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEOPOLDSTADT THEATRE AND MOZART.

The Vienna faëry *extravaganzas* in their last days—"*Der Diamant des Geister Königs*" at the Leopoldstadt Theatre—Mozart's "*Zauberflöte*"—Beethoven's character of the opera—A commonplace solution of its mysteries—Mozart's beauties of sentiment greater than those of his comic humour—A word on his "*Figaro*"—A note on his "*Entführung*"—A few speculations on Mozart's genius in general—His universal reputation—Sentimentality distinguished from feeling—The conclusion.

For another of the far famed diversions of Vienna, we were just in time: or we may be said to have seen it in its dying state, rather than to have partaken of it. I allude to those faëry *extravaganzas* of Italian origin, which long made the theatres of the suburbs famous; and in which the Austrian *Harlequin*, *Columbine*, and *Pantaloon*, so many a day contrived to keep

the public alive, and to say and to do as many absurd things beyond the bounds of license as a paternal censorship could bear. I was one among some forty people who, in the Leopoldstadt Theatre, solemnly sat through "*Der Diamant des Geister Königs*"—which, once upon a time, had drawn thither thousands to applaud its broad pantaloonery and pleasant satire.

Sooth to say, the piece, in which the local jokes were lost on me, would have stirred speculation, more than broad mirth, had the theatre been crammed in place of being cavernously empty. It was noticeable, for instance, to observe what things the very same censorship that had allowed Liszt to play, but not to publish, the Rakoczy march (a Hungarian patriotic measure), that had dealt so mercilessly with some of the noble sentiments in Schiller's "Wallenstein" at the Court Theatre—allowed the *Pasquins* of the Leopoldstadt Theatre to present. We saw, amongst other noticeable things, a dull king, with a very dull court, and a very dull people; and when the king said "Laugh!"—the court laughed in a very dull fashion—but none among the audience.—We saw a *Prince Cœlebs* in search of a virtuous

damsel for a wife; aided in his researches by a Squire endowed with a miraculous omniscience, —who set aside one Austrian candidate after another, with an immediate and impertinent disdain, and who only allowed his royal master to "throw the handkerchief" when the English-woman—the prudish, awkward, ill-dressed respectable Englishwoman of the Continental stage—appeared. This might be all warrantable and real enough; but the show of it, and the lethargic acquiescence of the public, were odd, to say the least of them. A little more keenly relished seemed to be a hit against the pedantry and poverty of the north Germans, in retaliation of the heavy pleasantries against Austrian vacancy and stupidity, which were so constant a topic at the coffee-visit and supper-party of Berlin, as I had known it. It is hardly needful to say that in all this, there was nothing really merry, or spontaneous, or expressive of the lives, humours, wants of the Austrian people. The popular tunes with which the piece was sown, were plodded through mechanically, rather than sung with real animation. Lethargy and death were even then upon the theatre.

For such a place of entertainment, and to

please a livelier public that once waited on the sallies of *Kasperl*, it was, that Mozart wrote his "Zauberflöte." The mystery and mystification which seem, like a fate, to have hung about the last deeds and the last days of the composer—and to have been deepened rather than dispelled by those who had his memory in keeping, have bred no speculations odder than the doubts, fancies, and judgments which critics have thrown out concerning the meaning and the value of this same "Magic Flute."—How Germans, familiar with the popular taste of Vienna in its entertainments—familiar with the technical science of Mozart and his notorious disclaimers of any deep poetical introversion — familiar, too, with the character of Shikaneder, the idol of his theatre, who, for that theatre, wrote the book which his playfellow, Mozart, undertook to make music for—can have bewildered themselves to find some solemn allegorical inner meaning for the story, appears to me only accountable on the supposition that such Germans have preferred imaginary discoveries of the kind to the plain real historical truth. There must be a set pattern in all such faëry plays: an imprisoned lady—a faithful knight—a skilful squire—a stupid tyrant: but

why this combination, because it was dressed up anew to please an old public with Priests of *Isis*, Genii, a Spirit Queen, and ordeals to exhibit the machinist and scene-painter, &c. &c.,—should be gravely analysed as one whit more mystical than "the Barber of Seville," where the same threadbare personages of Comedy figure in a more practical *harlequinade* of intrigue, elopement, and matrimony—has always puzzled my comprehension. It seems to me as if no one connected with the making of the work, was capable of a mystical conception. It is true, that the old original fable whence all these personages and productions radiate, might, peradventure, be referred back to the dark ages of Myth and Mythology; but who can seriously dream that either playwright or musician ever, for an instant, troubled himself concerning the symbolism of ancient oriental fable?—the paternity of *Punch* as ascribable to the lost tribes?—the triumph of Faith as shadowed forth in the dark ages of Paganism,—or the reward of Innocence and Charity, in which human Love finds so sweet and welcome a vindication?

Further, some darkness has been thrown on "Die Zauberflöte" by the *dictum* so often

quoted of Beethoven, that this was Mozart's "one German Opera," in right (so runs the gloss) of the style and solidity of its music. Let it be believed that Beethoven did say such a thing; and the speech, I think, will be found to carry little weight, if tried by Common-sense and not by

Wonder with a foolish face of praise.

Like many another sensitive, rude, vigorous, original, impulsive and retired poet, Beethoven may,—nay, seems oftentimes to have been a mystifier without knowing it—to have thrown out judgments and confessions in the angry haste of paradox—and not always, before he spoke, to have come to an agreement with himself as to the convictions which he expressed. Poetical license includes poetical nonsense: and this is more largely vented by none, than by the solemn, the gloomy, the vehement; who, taking it for granted that they are above the comprehension of ordinary mortals, are apt theatrically to assume the oracular character, and to-day to deliver that which shall not correspond with the morrow's rhapsody. Hemmed in, as he was, betwixt patrons and parasites—violent physical

passions, and an ever-pressing physical disqualification—to me it always seems as if Beethoven, though he aspired loftily, thought deeply, and felt intensely, spoke, wrote, and acted theatrically. Though such speech and action be not really insincere, they have many influences and effects in common with insincerity. Rhapsody and paradox are a temptation besetting natures like his—a consequence of such trials as those that beset him. They are a crude, eccentric manifestation of man's desire for sympathy, since that may present itself as a resolution to startle, no less than as a determination to agree—which may be ascribed in part to cruel position, in part to the lawless and tyrannical propensities of an uncurbed and ill-regulated nature.

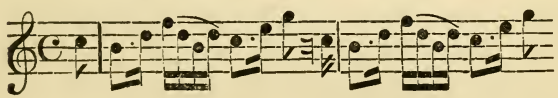
But whether or not such a reading of Beethoven's *dicta* on Music be generally warrantable, I think there are few who will in earnest accept and accredit his preference of the "Zauberflöte" as most the German in its style among Mozart's stage-works,—otherwise as his opera richest in musical expression, and containing the fewest concessions to the singers' foolish and arrogant love of display. Such praise might be given to Mozart's "Figaro" more fitly than to a work

on the one hand, containing such Vienna tunes as "*O cara armonia*," as the birdcatcher's ditty, as the nonsense duett "*Pa, pa*;" and, on the other, such airs of gratuitous display written for a singer of peculiar powers, as those allotted to the *Queen of Night*. It is true that in the music of the Temple Mozart rose to a high tone of solemn grandeur; but to this he had already proved himself equal in the graver portions of his "Idomeneo." It is true that everywhere is to be perceived the artist, in whom, with a perpetual flow of luscious and haunting melody, was combined a mastery over constructive science totally unparagoned, — that the musician and the man of sentiment, were too strong for the farcical and fantastic subject on which his good-nature had engaged him; but the outbreaks of religious spirit, and the exhibitions of recondite ingenuity (as in the accompanied *corale* for the two men in armour), which "Die Zauberflöte" contains, belong, I have always thought, not to the poem, but to Mozart. He delighted, betwixt sport and earnest, in technical exhibitions of science; while, as regards the apprehension of character or colour, rarely has a creator appeared more intensely steeped in personality than he.

In his very "Figaro," which is as music so incomparable, there is a voluptuous and impassioned elegance of tone,—a grace without comic vivacity—not existing in the comedy or characters of Beaumarchais.* In his "Cosi fan tutte,"

* The really gay stage-music of Mozart is almost entirely confined to his opera "Die Entführung."—There, however, it is exhibited with a vivacity, an impertinence, a breadth, a richness of colour that can never be sufficiently admired. While it is observable that in all his "airs of parade," Mozart followed the universal law, and improved and individualized his melody in each successive opera (some of his grandest single songs being in his "Titus") it may be also asserted, that he never equalled the humour, the brightness, and the sparkle, of certain passages in "Die Entführung." More excellent and characteristic comic music does not exist than the opening duet betwixt *Belmont* and *Osmin* (with the latter's stupid, surly ballad up among the apple-branches) — than the pompous air for the jealous old Turk, "*Solche hergelaufne Lauffen*" (mock dignity and importance, if there were ever such things)—than the *Terzetto* "*Marsch! Marsch!*" (in which science is effectively pressed into the service of Fancy)—than *Pedrillo's* merry drinking song "*Vivat Bachus!*" (which those curious in *tone* are invited to compare with the Bacchanalian music in "Don Juan")—than the explosion of *Blondine's* petulance in the final quartett of the second act,—where the incessant, unreasonable shrewishness of the waiting-maid disturbs the more sentimental suspense of the two lovers, with a comical contradiction, as importunate and tiresome as one of the "interruptions" in Miss Burney's novels.—Then, how capital are the Turkish choruses: so bright, so semi-savage, so perpetual, so melodious! The *prima donna* and the *primo tenore* are insipid enough: and here the concession of the creator to

which is throughout the broadest farce, the fickle ladies and their suspicious lovers sigh strains of deep and real tenderness which would become the high dames of crusading knights and their heroic consorts also.—*Fiordiligi* and *Guglielmo* might be another *Eloise* and *Abelard*. *Despina* herself moves nimbly, but is hardly gay. Thus those who, from the calm dignity of the sacred music in " Die Zauberflöte," have felt it incumbent on them to derive a grave solution for its story, I think have followed the instinct of their own proclivity to dream without rightly appreciating for what place and purpose the *extravaganza* was written, and by what manner of man it was set. If every note that Mozart wrote is lectured from, as explaining or expounding a subject, what will the transcendentalists make of such a phrase as this,



his executants tells with an oppressive influence on the permanent fame of his work: the diapason, too, in which the lady's airs are written is something of the acutest, but there is still in this opera, a soul of real mirth which quickens none other of Mozart's operas, and which justifies the liveliest regret that as a whole, taking the stage for what it is, " Die Entführung" is, perhaps, harldy any longer presentable.

what of other similar passages of cuckoo-*bravura* work which abound in the *Kyries* and *Benedictuses* of his services to the most supplicating of words, and at the most awful moments of the Roman Catholic mass?

It will be thought by many that too much has already been said in the above criticisms, derogatory to the renown of one whom the many have agreed to be the world's greatest musician—the few not dissenting. I know that I proceed at the risk of being considered pragmatical and eccentric for eccentricity's sake—of being rated among those worthless and troublesome cavillers who are tormented with the desire of deposing established divinities—I know that it is of little avail to protest that I do not pretend to say "the last word," concerning a master whom myriads have agreed to praise without reservation — but in spite of this, I feel as if I must offer a few remarks respecting Mozart and his genius—by the discussion of which, whether the ideas be denied or accepted, some service may be done to the world of Music.

There is probably no musician, living or dead, by whom the same general completeness of beauty has been exhibited as by the com-

poser of "Don Juan:" and perhaps no more exact parallel can be made, than the one which designates him the *Raphael* of his art. And thus the intense satisfaction that Mozart has ministered to every intelligence—lofty, mediocre, lowly—may by many be thought placed above examination and question; and thus examiners and inquirers may, by the very fact of their inquiry, be unfairly placed side by side with the group of strong and gnarled and gifted and perverse men, whose *pre*-Raphaelism in painting has become a by-word, and given a name to a school. Nevertheless, though perfect harmony and beauty command the largest congregation, and subdue the large proportion of the mixed intelligence and affectionate faith of the world (this without cant or hypocrisy on the part of true believers),—though, further, without an overruling feeling for Beauty, the imaginative arts can have small existence as arts—harmony is still not the only essential quality—beauty is still not the highest merit—because it may exist without the existence of commanding power, of brilliant genius, of fresh invention. And seeing that Mozart has enchanted rather than excited the world—seeing that he has provided for the

average sensations and sympathies of mankind, rather than enlarged the number of these or exalted their quality—it appears to me impossible entirely to subscribe to his supremacy as affording that *Alpha* and *Omega* of musical excellence, which the fond millions of his worshippers have delighted to ascribe to it.

To state the argument in another form, let me submit that in art, in literature—in all that concerns appeal to the sympathies by imagination—there are few confusions more frequently made than that of sentiment for feeling. We lean to the former because it soothes us, afflicts us with a pleasing pain, strews flowers above all corpses, presents the right emotion at the right moment—calling on us neither to scale terrible heights, nor to fathom perilous depths—while it in no respect shrinks from the extremes of ecstacy and despair. It is not merely the light of heart, the frivolous of character, the feeble in thought, whom sentiment satisfies, persuades, and fascinates. There are many of a graver, deeper nature, more cruelly afflicted in their own experiences, who object that Art should in any form mirror the secrets of their hearts: considering it in some sort as a holiday-land, a

place of healing repose, and of easy (not vacant) enjoyment—not as an arena in which the battle of life and suffering may be fought over again, merely by phantom combatants.

The perfection, then, of sentimental expression —more generally popular because less disturbing than the deepest feeling or the most poignant dramatic power—is the quality which has universally charmed the world in the music of Mozart, expressed as it is by him in a style where freedom and severity, Italian sweetness of vocal melody and German variety of instrumental science, are combined as they have never been before or since his time.—That he could rise above this level is as true, as that for the most part he *did not* rise above it.—The opening scene of "Don Juan," the recitative "*Don Ottavio son morto*," the *stretto* to the *finale* in the first act, and the cemetery duett in that opera,—the "*Confutatis*" in the "Requiem,"—the pianoforte *fantasia* in C minor,—and the overture to the "Zauberflöte," among his instrumental writings—all instances of what I consider higher in tone than mere sentiment—will perhaps suffice to illustrate my distinction. In the generality of Mozart's works, however,

there is an evenness of beauty, an absence of excitement—dare I say, an inattention to characterization in drama—which leave something of vigour and variety to be desired. Within the circle of his Oratorios and *cantatas* (their respective musical epochs compared) Handel is more various than the composer of "Figaro" in his "Jupiter Symphony," his quartetts, his masses, and his pianoforte works. Haydn, in his instrumental works, has fresher inspirations—never any so voluptuous—many more frivolous (for Mozart was never frivolous, even when writing a waltz or a *quodlibet*)—but some more picturesque in their originality.—Gluck is grander and more impassioned in opera.—Beethoven, of course, flies many an arrow-flight beyond him in Symphony, *Sonata*, Quartett, and *Concerto*.—While no one who has done so much has done so generally well, there is no single work by Mozart in any style, than which some other single work having greater interest, by some other composer, could not be cited.—We can go backward from Mozart to Bach and Handel.—We can go forward from him to Beethoven.—We can condescend (if it please the purists so to state the case) from "Don

Juan" and "Figaro," to "Guillaume Tell" and "Il Barbiere;"—but some of us cannot return from any of these masters to Mozart without feeling as if some of the brightness so long thought incomparable had passed away from our divinity; that while, as a mingler of many powers he has no peer—if regarded either as a subduer, as an awakener, or as a charmer by mirth—there are separate stars of the first magnitude, larger than his star.

A philosophical biographer might possibly trace what I have ventured to describe as the character of Mozart's music, to his parentage and education. Though a mere way-side sketcher, I could not but imagine, while in Vienna, that the influences of Austrian rule on modes and manners, might also have had some share in deciding the cast and tone of his utterances. Of these influences I have next to offer a few impressions.

CHAPTER V.

AUSTRIAN INFLUENCES ON ART.

Ennui *versus* mirth in Vienna—Patient case of *espionage*—Tales of insecure life and property—Diversion for grown folk in the *Prater*—Romantic reading for the million—Strange torpor in a theatrical book-shop—The sum of these details discouraging—Death of Mozart betwixt sensuality and neglect—The cemetery at Währing—Beethoven's grave—A glance at his sufferings—A speculation on the tendency of Vienna influences—Enervation and exacerbation—A word or two on the subject of compensation.

It will be seen by the foregoing notes, that though little or no musical life, in my acceptation of the word, was to be found at Vienna, with the performances I did find there, I had no reason to be discontented,—allowing for the season of the year, the absence from town of most of the resident patrons of Music, and its natural consequence in the avoidance of any efforts at novelty in production. One thing, however, which

almost every tourist in turn had bid me to expect, was totally missing from the Austrian metropolis which I saw—namely, that lightness of heart which is said to be the companion of, and apology for emptiness of head. Preparations and materials for the diversion of the idle were on every side; but the idleness was more obvious than the diversion—the *ennui* than the mirth.

There is, perhaps, a fate in first impressions; yet they are not altogether to be distrusted. Entering the lines on the road from Nussdorf, the man who saluted our clean, talkative *Jehu*, with a leather-topped stick in his hand, was pointed out to me as belonging to the police. I had not slept a night in the Austrian capital, before another such civil-looking, middle-aged, tidily-dressed official was allotted to me, as guard of honour. He never accosted me—he never came very near me—but he never let me go out of his sight for ten minutes at a time. In the Cathedral which I loved to haunt, for the sake of the wonderful effects of light and shade, belonging to the morning mass in that dark building, when the sun glances on the silver altar, veiled by its incense-fumes—my quiet

friend was never missing. In the picture galleries, he was always some four or five Rubens' breadth distant from me; nay, when I went to pay a visit to a gentleman in the Chancellory whom I had known in London, he rested on the bench nearest to the door, till my call was paid, and when I moved on—he moved on too. It suited my curiosity to go to two theatres on the same evening—a thing which few save foreigners ever do, especially when at neither theatre a novelty is played. It suited my shadow to follow me.—Now, whereas the most affectionately intimate *espionage* applied to a traveller can only seriously annoy those who have anything to conceal, the compliment in question perpetually kept before my mind considerations of a certain order, not the most favourable to belief in the easy, unconscious enjoyment of the people among whom I was thrown. It is impossible to conceive truthfulness surviving among those who are liable, on the slightest possible argument, to be perpetually watched. I may, it is true, have paid for the blatant and ignorant rudeness of some English predecessor, who, fancying himself in search of information, began to seek, by holding a court of justice and abuse

on all that he saw and heard, with any passing stranger for audience. Such ill-advised and audacious censors, loud in proportion to their ignorance and insignificance, are unhappily not rare. But the wisdom of the mode of castigation and superintendence may be questioned; and one of its fruits, I fear, may be traced in a reputation of national untrustworthiness, which is painful to accept when it is fixed on a people so good-natured as the Viennese.

Another among my impressions of Vienna, was even less encouraging. This, too, might be a chance, not occurring every year—but I never was in any town, where so many gloomy tales of personal insecurity seemed to cluster round one. The mystery and caution of the Police, which draw, as it were, a veil before every offence and accident, do more to set imagination to work, than the most blood-thirsty and naked newspaper narrative, which exhibits every hideous detail of yesterday's crime or accident, on every meek and quiet citizen's breakfast-table. Warnings to avoid such a part of the city, after an early hour in the evening—misty half-finished tales of strangers who had suddenly disappeared, and of *razzias* in consequence made

by the authorities which had cleared Vienna of a couple of hundred known miscreants at one swoop—seemed to fall to our lot in unusual profusion. The narrations which would befit a by-way in the Abruzzi, or a lonely house on the Pontine Marshes, jarred on the ear in a metropolis to which we had been bidden to look as the *Palladium* of laughter-loving, eating and drinking security, the inhabitants of which, too, were prevented by Paternal Care from "dying on the morrow."

In the matter of laughter, even, when no such discords as the above were in the question, my fare by no means made good the experiences of former holiday-keepers. The world of Vienna, it is true, seemed to be perpetually out in the streets, and in the suburbs, and in the *Prater*—the female portion of it to get its rouge on at a very early hour in the morning—the male, to be singularly dapper in its dress. But there is such a thing as going abroad because one is "sated of home;" and to this truth the staircases of many a great London house on many a May midnight, will exhibit an abundance of tolerably stale illustrations.—Neither "stupid," nor "inane," were the epithets which

I should apply to the aspect of the Viennese whenever I saw them in numbers—but "used up" to the point of Parisian exhaustion, without having that Parisian *esprit* which can turn even cynicism into something wearing the semblance of individuality and entertainment.

For instance—in the gardens where music and beer flow, which every one frequents, and in which "true joys" (as the Prussian Princes said of Vauxhall) were thought "to abound"—I did not receive much idea of gaiety from the spectacle of fat, solitary elderly men,—beguiling the time with cup and ball, or with flinging a ring to catch a hook hanging out of a lion's mouth, or, if not able to pay for the use of these dainty devices, with trying to balance their umbrellas on their fingers. The festival of the *Madonna* fell on one of the days of our stay in Vienna:—and though dancing was not permitted by the Church, merry-go-rounds,—or as they called them, *carrousels*—might do their worst in the *Prater*, without any deadly sin.—We must have passed twenty, if one, on one afternoon's walk; all of them inclosed in solid wooden houses, all of them largely accustomed. But the solemnity with which they circulated, would have been canonical

in the penitential week of Lent. I could not see one eager, childish face—I did not hear one hearty laugh. It is true that we came upon an Amazonian dame or damsel, some six feet high, whose poppy red cheeks shone bright beneath the panoply of a wide-brimmed hat, and who sate on her wooden horse, according to the stage-notions of a throned queen, in an attitude of deliberate grandeur not to be put into words. The male bystanders of giraffes, ostriches, ounces, fiery dragons, &c., mostly smoked the pipe of meditation. One youth about twenty, with a *toilette* choice enough for any London ball-room, mounted on his high-mettled racer, was industriously jogging up and down, so as to make his ride excitingly real, with his *calumet* resting betwixt the wooden ears of his horse. Others took their places in company behind a mimic locomotive, which emitted volcanic noises, calculated to suggest ideas of explosion.—But all was done gravely: without the slightest show of joke or whimsy. How different was this from the humour of such merry crowds as I have loved to watch along the quays or on the little *tragnetti* at Venice; making their own fun out of the most elderly and wretched puppet-show, or the old

wrinkled monkey, as sad as *Simon Stylites*, on the top of his master's melancholy organ! Yet every one has heard that Venice is in decay—and has been incited to wail over the gaiety of the sea-city, as a spirit pressed out beneath the heel of Austrian occupation; whereas Vienna has no less universally passed for the palace and paradise of all thoughtless pleasures.

Rising no very arduous step in the scale of intellect, the same impressions of blankness, vacancy, and torpor, presented themselves.—The booksellers' windows were filled with dream-books, lottery-tables—and old romances with their grisly frontispieces of mailed champions, *Sabrinas* in their floating veils, ghosts in their shrouds, or skeletons without. One of these precious books, by the way, furnished matter for a day's earnest perusal, to one of the stalwart peasant men we saw on the Danube steamer, as we ascended the stream.—A new drama was one night produced at the *Burg Theater*, either Halm's "Zampiero" or "Ein weisses blatt" by Gutzkow, I forget which. Being prevented from seeing it I wished to buy the play—so I went into a professedly theatrical bookseller's shop, on the Graben, for that purpose, and asked for the book.

No one knew anything about it—"*What* did I please to want?"

The new play—the play that had been played the night before at the *Burg Theater*.

"Had there been a new play?"

A play bill being fished out, it appeared that such an event *had* happened.

I might as well have gone no further, but I inquired whether the new play was to be had in a printed form.

"They could not tell."

Would they find out for me?—would they inquire in the theatre?

"If I would come again to-morrow."—I called on three consecutive days with precisely the same satisfactory result: and till I reached Munich three weeks later, was unable to find out whether the new play had been yet published or not. The shopmen were not uncivil, I must add—only totally ignorant and lethargic.

I could lengthen this list of traits and details, which presented themselves unsought, during our stay in Vienna. Enough, however, I think, have been given, to explain how, while I was there, it seemed easy to understand the untimely

death of Mozart,—the neglect of the sepulchres of himself and of Gluck, and the harsh discontent which exacerbated Beethoven's life in its prime, and its decay.

Whether or not it be consolatory to believe that those existences are not always the most melancholy, which seem the saddest; some such belief will, at all events, be forced upon all who have had opportunity of studying closely the lives of persons of imagination so often wailed over by gazers at a distance. But, at best, few destinies seem to be sadder, than those of the two great masters of German music, who took up the art where Haydn had left it, and who died in the city of Haydn's adoption, under circumstances of peculiar melancholy.—Every touch and trait of the man Mozart that we possess, show him to have been by nature gifted, genial, cheerful. Ruinously educated—for what can be worse than an infancy and boyhood of prodigious exhibition?—he might still, it is just possible, have been retrieved to a tranquil manhood of steady and healthy labour, had his art stood better in Austria than it did — had not his habits vibrated betwixt his haunting the antechambers of the great in quest of capricious

patronage—and fagging for narrow-minded publishers, or wasting his genius in the service of tavern and masquerade companions. The sinews of his intellect and purpose had never been strengthened: his sensibilities had been forced and encouraged: his genius fed on stimulants. He was a child in the affairs of men: good-natured, cowardly, superstitious, and extravagant. He was unable, by his own showing, to render a reason for much that individualized his conceptions; he wrought with a facility as instinctive as the slightest of the Italian melodists. Yet I will never believe but that he was perplexed with forebodings and strivings,—with the struggles of a genius too fervid and impassioned for his frame to abide the strife—with an unexplained sense of vanity and vexation of spirit, and of powers not wrought up to their fullest capacity.—Surely to no such wants or weaknesses, felt or unfelt, was the state of morals or of society at Vienna calculated to administer. Plunged into a life of orgies, towards which he leaned—since how should one so educated have leaned *from* it?—the ceaseless wear and tear of dissipation and difficulty proved too much for his frame of body and mind.—Down he sank,

forlorn and exhausted, into the midst of the whirlpool, and its waves closed over him.

There was no being in Vienna without making a pilgrimage to Beethoven's grave. From the *Freyung* where I took vehicle, to the graveyard where he lies, is but a step.

I was put a little out of tune for such an excursion by the jovial face of my *Jehu*—"Where to, in Währing?" was his question, as he let down the step of the *fiacre*. "To the cemetery," was my simple answer: and I remembered an old German goblin-tale of two sedan-bearers, who were honoured with the same commission, after a masquerade, from a real skeleton; for my driver's astonished visage, with a little romantic colour, could have passed for theirs.—But it was a broad, shining, cloudless noon, and the interval betwixt the city and the fortifications is anti-poetical as most suburbs of capitals are.—The lines passed, a road bordered by acacia-trees leads to a height, from which the views on every side are most lovely.—The village was soon hurried through, and the cemetery reached. A little girl, the identical *Wilhelmine* of Southey's ballad, ran, knitting in hand, with a large prosperous-looking cat trot-

ting behind her, to show me the tomb. It stands hard by the monuments to the Chevalier Von Seyfried and to Schubert—and is a cheerful-looking white sarcophagus, having an obelisk ornamented with a gilt lyre, and a butterfly within a coiled serpent, for its only devices:—for its motto simply,

BEETHOVEN.

The taste of all this is quiet and good, if not exalted. But it is hard to express how the air of placidity, not to say, prosperity, belonging to that tomb, struck my imagination as curiously at variance with the youth, the life, and the death of the stormy being who sleeps there. Never was the dark and cureless unhappiness of his life so forcibly made present to me as by that contrast. It might be owing merely to the influences of Day and Noon, working by antipathy; but I never felt the weight of Beethoven's sorrow so gravely as in that place, where every object conspires to soothe the senses and to suggest the thought of

Honour, love, obedience, troops of friends

around the death-bed of the man of genius.

I thought of his early difficulties—not those

common-place and unimportant struggles to gain hearing and opportunity, which form a part of the class-education of every artist, essential to the free play of his faculties, and to that self-reliance without which no great work is achieved—but of the waking-up of a rugged temper and a suspicious spirit in the midst of impulses the most generous—in the midst of affections which lacerated their possessor in the shape of self-remorse, after those moods in which his dark angel got the ascendancy.—I thought, too, what must have been the peculiar terrors of slow-growing deafness to one of such a harsh, singular, intractable nature as his,—vexed by the misdeeds of rapacious and disreputable kindred, and aware that the sense essential to the delight of his existence, was dying out, day by day, sound by sound.—I thought how the struggles of Beethoven with his calamity, instead of converting it into a disguised blessing, resembled the ferocious strength and the aimless impotence of the writhings of an animal in torture. Like a child he tried to hide his malady, as if concealment could give him back consciousness of sound. Then came gloomy despondency—" rages," not like those of Byron's

childhood, "silent," but immoderate and brutal, striking right and left, and often heavily wounding those steady and considerate friends of whom, beyond all other men of genius, he stood in need.—Then came death, after a long time of disease—to a body worn with pain—to a mind haunted by ceaseless fears of want, and by cruel convictions that he was dying forsaken and ungratefully treated.

There was something of morbid distortion, something of moral obliquity, in the latter part of Beethoven's life. It has always seemed to me a miserable thing, that, with money in the bank, the friend of so many Austrian noblemen and Prussian princes should, almost *in formâ pauperis*, have sued a society of London music-makers for the benefaction, which was to provide him with food and fire—with a bed to die on, and a mass to be sung over him.—God forbid that we should lay this miserable thing at the door of Genius! God forbid still more that we should not be able to separate the diviner mind of the poet in his works from that which was gross, trivial, and melodramatic in the man! That is no real homage which writes lies on grave-stones:—which will not admit, which cannot allow, which

dare not forgive without denying all offence! There is enough, and more than enough, in the master-works of Beethoven, to place him among the inspired men who have appeared on the earth;—and the violence and paltriness which a calm examination of the facts of his life tends to disclose, howsoever at variance they be with the raptures of those who have draped him for a complete hero, and who have accepted all his sayings for oracles, do nothing to shake our affection for him in his art. We are certain, that there, all that was best, least mortal, and most spiritual, had a glorious and lofty utterance, the elevating influences of which will be felt by our children's children.

Granting his fierceness — granting even his falseness, if falseness there was — in Vienna, there seemed to me a ready explanation, if not absolution, for such melancholy discrepancy and short-coming.

The moral rot which, when I saw the city of his adoption, pervaded it to putrefaction, could hardly fail to have reached his mind—to have rendered his terrible trials so many arguments for fierce and sullen contest, not motives for his exercise of that vigorous

resignation which ends in binding underfoot the Great Despair. I cannot believe that it was deafness alone which rendered Beethoven niggardly, suspicious, harsh, and untruthful. It may have been also the mixture of flattery, folly, and falsehood, around him — it may have been in part consciousness of yielding to sensual fascination which was to be compensated for by a fierce and almost brutal self-assertion. The influences of perpetually breathing an atmosphere of untruthfulness (perfumed, as it were by fits, with the courtesies and blandishments of sensual good nature), have perhaps never been studied in the fulness of their variety, by morbid anatomists of character. That which shall enervate a Mozart with his genial temperament, his expansive nature, and his early experience of power to lavish and to receive pleasure, shall merely irritate a more rugged, less perfectly organized, less worldly, later-ripened humourist such as Beethoven; though while both may be conscious of the deleterious effect, neither shall have strength to deliver himself from it.

But while as concerns the interests of Art, we look with a keen eye on the defective morals

of Vienna—while we illustrate their corruption, and hollowness, and folly, from the sorrows of those endowed with a divine gift, who have nevertheless failed to live well and to die happily there; let us in vindication of humanity, no less earnestly dwell upon and rejoice in the great and good things which were given forth from Vienna, in spite of the poisons in its air—in spite of the canker at the very heart of its artistic life which so few, whether artist or amateur travellers, seem to me to have felt. What Mozart and Beethoven might have been under a more healthy dispensation—less frivolously kind, on the one hand, less heartlessly indifferent on the other—is shadowed forth by what they *were*, with all the disadvantages of Austria against them. Instead of being hireling buffoons at the beck of capricious aristocratic patronage, they were noble poets. They did something to raise the people of a city, poor and Circæan in its tone, towards higher sensations than those of mere animal pleasure. It may have been one of those compensations, the discernment of which, in proportion as Life advances, satisfies the weary to wait, and the indignant to be calm—that, into the midst of

a metropolis where intellect and scholarship have been so cruelly trammelled and oppressed, so brilliant a line of artists should have been dropped, for the rescue of its people from an utterly base and vacant life.—But this possibly is idle wandering—and, if not, assuredly small comfort could be found in the city of Vienna—as moralist, musician, or man of imagination has known it, during the years immediately preceding the revolutions of 1848.

CHAPTER VI.

SCHUBERT AND HIS MUSIC.

An original Austrian composer—Memoir of Schubert by Herr Bauernfeld—Salieri Schubert's instructor; his kindness—The pupil's resistance—His natural gift of melody—He becomes usher in a school—Is patronized by the Esterhazy family—His habits and manners—His death—The cemetery at Währing—His vocal compositions—His instrumental compositions—Why the latter are unsatisfactory—Schubert the last creative influence of Vienna.

WHETHER the theory of the influences of Austrian life and society upon the well-being and the well-doing of the musician and his art, indicated in the foregoing pages, be overstrained, or the reverse, it receives further illustration in the story of the last of the classical composers of Vienna, who lived, died, and was buried, comparatively unknown, in the midst of a world unworthy of him.—For a genius that—while Beethoven was existing, and where Rossini was reigning—could strike out a path for itself so original

as Schubert's, amounts to a phenomenon rare in the annals of Music, meriting kind entertainment in a city the music of which has been so long its boast. How far fortune followed desert, may be gathered from a brief memoir of Schubert by Herr Bauernfeld, on the leading facts contained in which we may dwell for a moment.

Francis Schubert was born in the Lichtenthal suburb of Vienna, on the last day of January, 1797. His father was in the humble circumstances of a schoolmaster; but the German instructor of boys must command some musical acquirement, and Father Schubert was able to teach Francis the rudiments of music and the violin, while an elder brother instructed the child on the pianoforte. By the time that Francis was eleven years of age, he had become known as possessor of a beautiful voice — received an appointment as chorister in the Royal Chapel, and was admitted as a pupil of the *Konvikts*—one of the many educational foundations, by aid of which Austria has avoided to educate her people. There was an orchestra in this college able to perform the symphonies of the German composers; and at the head of this band the boy was placed shortly after entering the school.

It seems that the boy Francis began to imagine and to write, as fast as he learned, music. Before he was eleven years of age, he had produced pianoforte pieces, *quartetts*, little songs,—a year or two later he wrote a *fantasia* for the Pianoforte, which his biographer specifies as (till that time) his most important work.—Some of these efforts were brought under the notice of Salieri, whose interest was excited on behalf of the youth. It is pleasant to read that the humanity of a *maestro* who has always laid under the stigma of having stood in Mozart's way—to the point even of his being wildly accused of having caused the administration of *aqua tofana* to the composer of "Don Juan"—should be vindicated by the interest he took in a young German composer; since Herr Bauernfeld, though sarcastic on the studies enjoined by Salieri (the scores of the elder Italian masters), does justice to the intention of his kindness. The youth is said to have wearied after a while of his patron's exercises as *rococo*, being excited and led away—who can wonder? —by the superior poetry and originality of Beethoven's works. He would be a German artist; forgetting that the principles of Art are

canonical, scientific in number and in beauty; referable to no country—though in Music, best exemplified in Italy; because there the science of counterpoint could be the most purely studied, in that simple four-part vocal writing, which preceded the orchestral complications matured and increased by German inventors. It might have been well for Schubert's general fame, had he lent a more patient ear to the formal counsels of Salieri.—Meanwhile, to the distaste of his orderly preceptor, whose ideas of words fit for music were possibly akin to those of his countryman, Metastasio—young Schubert flung himself on the verses of Goethe and Schiller, and tried, in his own way, to work them out, and to mate them with music.—The youth had the natural gift of vocal melody, and in spite of false lights and disturbing influences—for such indeed must be those of Beethoven if considered as a model—it cleft out a channel for itself—a form and a flow, not merely belonging to his country, but also peculiar to himself.—All this time the current of his life did not run propitiously for art. After leaving the seminary in which he had been placed, Schubert was compelled to go

home, and assist his father in keeping school.—He was wont, says Herr Bauernfeld, to boast of having shown great firmness as an usher. If this be true, I fear he may be credited with having expended all the discipline at his disposal on his pupils. We are further told, that such were the restricted circumstances of Schubert's boyhood and youth, that he was fifteen years old ere he entered a theatre. Yet we are informed that when he was nineteen, he applied for the place of a theatrical musical directorship at Laibach.

There are other contradictions not very easy to reconcile in Herr Bauernfeld's memoir. While in one paragraph we read that hackneyed jeremiade over the disregard shown by bystanders to Genius in its struggles, with which apologists think to make us forget the self-disregard of struggling genius—from another we learn that Schubert passed several summers at Szeleck in Hungary with a branch of the Esterhazy family. It may have been in his, as in Mozart's case, that a certain amount of aristocratic patronage did co-exist with substantial neglect;—but it may have been, too, that the younger musical *protegé* of the great

had those wilful and wayward ways which, however charming they be in *my Lord*, are not readily forgiven in *my Lord's* humble friend. In proportion as an aspirant tries to thrive by courtiership, he will sometimes disdain the subordination inevitable to a courtier — as though, by virtually insulting the prejudices and humours of those whose aid he invokes to advance his fortunes, he could assert his independence. Over all these sunken rocks Herr Bauernfeld's love for Schubert's genius has led him to fling a thousand shades, and mists, and gay colours. — Nor, in another point, will the biographer find it easy, from this memoir, to come at the simple truth. The songs of Schubert are described as on their production to have excited a lively sensation :—many of them were taken up by Herr Vogel, a singer in high repute, and by him "created," to use a French phrase, with great success.—This, however, can have hardly got beyond a *coterie* popularity in their composer's lifetime, or how should we have had to read of the miserable pittance for which they were sold in rich and joyous Vienna? Light is thrown on the matter by the testimony of Schubert's

contemporaries and comrades, from which something may be gathered concerning the predilection of the young Viennese for the pleasures of the tavern and the beer-cellar; and, as a consequence of these tastes and pleasures, the necessity of his hawking about his most exquisite compositions (like our George Morland) for ready money, no matter how miserable the sum. — In truth, as indeed may be inferred from the fine phrases of Herr Bauernfeld's defence of his behaviour, Schubert was something of a "rough diamond." He is said, in this Bauernfeld memoir, to have alienated Weber by offering criticisms on "Euryanthe" (that opera written for Vienna which seems to have been generally so roughly handled by the Viennese *maestri*), and Weber is accused of being "French and finical," because he was aggrieved by the younger man's honest opinion. We have elsewhere been used to read of Weber as the rude speaker among flatterers,—and of Weber's betters as having been "false and conventional" in their reception of *his* sincerities.—Thus perpetually do tales change their actors, while they keep their leading features and morals!

Whether or not, however, Schubert was bearish and arrogant in the matter,—whether or not his was generally a behaviour calculated to attract friends besides those who give their friends blank credit,—it seems obvious that his must have been a life visited by gleams and fancies of some ideal far above those ever attained by him. Fragments from his journals and letters are quoted by Herr Bauernfeld, giving tokens of thought, aspiration, elevation of taste and motive;—and though the Germans are portentous journalizers, there being hardly a *Johann* among them but who has his *stamm-buch* full of "mysterious and hieroglyphical sayings," there still appears to have been in Schubert something more strenuous, genuine, and real, than the mere tawdry sentiment, having nothing in common with honesty, feeling, and purpose (as we English understand them), that so many similar collections and selections reflect and register.

For to set against all this implied incompleteness of life, and this want of recognition, which in some respects implies want of desert, the remarkable industry of Schubert must be insisted upon, to his praise.—Though the man (in spite of Herr Bauernfeld's elaborate defences) seems

to have been somehow at odds with society—the musician was not indolent in cultivating his art to the best of his ability.—"He wrote," says the *memorandum* to which I am indebted, "about four hundred songs, and several *Cantatas* for particular occasions,—thirteen Operas and musical dramas (some of which are unfinished),—two *Melodramas*, six *Symphonies*, several *Masses*, a great number of *quartetts* for stringed instruments, pianoforte pieces, in the form of *quintett*, *quartett*, *trio*, *duett*, and *solo Sonata*,—part-songs, dance-music," &c., &c. Yet Schubert's career was not a long one, since after a period of doubtful health, beginning late in the autumn of 1828, he took to his bed on the 11th of November, and on the 17th "was gathered to his fathers." He was interred in the cemetery of Währing, and accompanied to the grave (Herr Bauernfeld adds) by a long procession of friends and admirers. Among the very last pieces of characteristic news which have arrived from Vienna, was a notice that some friendly and affectionate singers had celebrated his death-day, so lately as last year but one (1852), by singing part-music at the gate of the burial ground in which his kinsfolk had laid him.

A few words remain to be added regarding the compositions of Schubert.—It is possibly at once too late and too early, to range his songs in their right place among the world's musical treasures. Such an essay would, indeed, include an examination of the musician's art of song-writing. We must therein settle how far independence of, how far interdependence with, the poet may be carried by his coadjutor—and what are the uses, powers, and limits of accompaniment. We should further have to decide betwixt the Italian idea of vocal expression, as the last finish confided to the executant which must be wrought out by his voice from slender indications,—and the German resolution to reduce the vocalist to a slave.—We should next have to examine if that can be a poetical treatment of the poet's text, which admits every conceivable instrumental interruption, on the argument of stop, or breathing-place;—whether the spirit of the entire scene, person, or thought, is to be pictured and provided for, or the separate meaning of every word,—the latter a canon enjoining, for instance, that if "*a false love*," or "*death*" be mentioned ever so incidentally in the midst of the liveliest carol written for girl's voice,

the strain for a few notes or bars shall become gloomy, sinister, and discordant.—In short, the great battle of the schools must be settled, or pronounced (as it probably is) "a drawn battle," ere the exact height of the pedestal on which these remarkable works may stand, can be ascertained. It is certain that some among Schubert's songs, are liable to the objection of being pianoforte compositions with a voice part. In his "Erl König," the declamatory passages given to the singer would possess small significance, disconnected from the tremendous "*night ride*" of the accompaniment; and hence, that ballad becomes almost as effective, as a *lied ohne wörte*, when it is played on the pianoforte by Liszt, or on the violin by Ernst—as when it is declaimed as written, by a Schröder-Devrient, or an Adelaide Kemble.—Another illustration, though in a far more pleasing form, is to be found in the setting of the mournful song of Goethe's *Margaret* at her spinning-wheel—where, again, the ear is more wooed by the murmurous hum of the wheel, than moved by the woe of the singer. Nor can the above examples be defended as so many entire songs, save by connivance in the degradation of vocal melody to a

secondary place.* This, however, was not invariably Schubert's practice. His settings of Scott's "Ave Maria," and of Shakspeare's "Hark the lark,"—his "Post," his "Ungeduld," his "Ständchen," are but five among his many specimens of song in its perfect form, with the most natural disposition of parts. We remember all the five by what the voice utters, *not* by the pianoforte—by the charm on the ear, as much as by the strong words *italicised* and the

* This degradation once admitted, inevitably implies decline in Art, and thus affords comparison a point for its operations. Let us look at such among Handel's songs as are the strongest in character, colour, and situation; such, for instance, as the song of *Polyphemus*, "O ruddier than the cherry" ("Acis")—the song of *Semele*, "O sleep" ("Semele")—the song of *Pleasure*, "There the brisk sparkling nectar" ("Choice of Hercules")—or *Susanna's* scene, "If guiltless blood" ("Susanna")—or the lament in "Saul," "In sweetest harmony,"—or the entire music given to *Iphis*, *Jephtha's* daughter, in "Jephtha," and we shall find, that while none of these yield to any compositions extant in depth of feeling, richness of colour, and power to move, the depth, the richness, and the power, lie in the vocal part—inextricably associated with the words which the singer must deliver, and thus in their right and lawful place. In none of the specimens mentioned, could any new scoring deprive the noble and expressive, and pathetic melodies of their prominence. Therein, they are models for songs, and will remain such, however vast and various be the future developments of instrumental discovery.

weak ones weakly set. We feel in them the fresh, fascinating, impassioned melodist. We long to sing them, and to hear them sung—in place of merely putting up with the voice, as one among other means of execution. The accompaniment in all is pertinent, ingenious, and therein full of genius: but it is listened to as accompaniment, not as exposition.—What has befallen the German *lied* writers, who have followed in Schubert's wake, for want of some discrimination in their idolatry, and of some reference to fixed principles in their imitation of his manner, need hardly be told. Their grim, and dry, and far-fetched productions, without a single note of melody, full of threadbare pretension in the manner of clothing and setting them forth—with accompaniments well nigh as disagreeable to play as the vocal parts are to listen to—are legion in number; already on their way to the limbo of forgotten deformities.

On the other hand, the slighter and more tuneable melodies by Proch, Kücken, Kalliwoda, and Reissiger, and such other pleasing melodists,—among the most recent of which may be mentioned some graceful compositions by Dessauer and Esser—can neither singly establish

a reputation, nor collectively form a group of compositions, that will retain a place in future histories of German music.—Since the death of Schubert, there has been only one *lied*-writer who has made "a mark" of any vigour and individuality, and that was Mendelssohn; regarding whose deserts, I have not here to speak.

Setting aside the beautiful and peculiar songs in question, there is little music extant so provoking as the music of Schubert: at once so rich in fancy, so meritorious in respect of constructive ingenuity;—yet so unavailable, so incomplete, and so likely to remain till Doomsday, under the cloud of neglect and misunderstanding.—The public is more displeased by want of proportion than by want of invention. New ideas, indeed, if they be not well set, are more apt to annoy than to attract those who have found a groove in which their admiration can run smoothly. There is not one instrumental piece by Schubert, whether it be his *Symphony* in C major, his stringed *Quartett* in D minor, his two pianoforte *Trios*, his *Rondo* for pianoforte and violin, his pianoforte *Divertimenti* for four hands, or his pianoforte *solo Sonatas*, which does not contain first thoughts, phrases, and melodies,

on which Beethoven might have consented to work, having, moreover, a wild spirit and sweetness totally unborrowed.—There are in all of them grand strokes of bold modulation, strange dispositions of the instruments :—but all may be charged with a want of success, which cannot but be felt by the discriminating connoisseur ; while it is not made amends for by admiration from the less thoughtful public.—Their failure in effect is as complete, with those who can, as with those who cannot judge. The former, indeed, may suffer with, and in fact, because of the latter. For let the calmest of critics, the one most gifted with the power of abstraction, say what he will, there is an influence in sympathy and antipathy neither to be denied nor altogether resisted. A solitary listener to the *finale* of Beethoven's C minor *Symphony*, would find himself in a far different state of warmth and enjoyment, from the same man, when he was one among eight hundred listeners. The impression of *ennui* "runs like wildfire :"—and on all musicians whose taste is in a healthy state, as distinguished from those who will pardon everything, so that it is unfamiliar, the instrumental music of Schubert is calculated to produce the impression of *ennui* and singularity

combined. The drowsy amateur, gifted with mediocre powers of appreciation, cannot follow it from beginning to end, without trouble or close attention. The more mercurial and impatient hearer, who is excited by some boldly-marked or stirring phrase to hope for something new and picturesque beyond the ordinary, becomes blanked by long, weary passages of constructive *remplissage*, in which it would seem as if the composer had gone on simply because he did not know how to change the inspiration. This is a sad result, when, in addition to the amount of genius flawed, lost, buried, the amount of wasted time, energy, and labour, is considered; and when there is so little chance of any future generation changing the sentence passed by the present for a verdict more indulgent.

With Schubert may be almost said to have "gone out" the light of creative genius in Vienna, save under those slight manifestations which some will cavil at finding included by me in the chronicles of a city, where Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, successively flourished.—There are still great Austrian noblemen who give quartett-parties, and who present themselves as amateur composers—there is still ball, and theatre, and

symphonic, and garden-music; and up to 1848, there were still those gigantic winter performances of *Oratorios* in the Riding School, that, by reason of their scale, have commanded so much attraction in Europe.—The temples are still open,—the old gods are still in some degree worshipped,—but the old priests are gone, and there are no new ones to fill their places.

MUSIC IN THE RHINE LAND.

1844-5-6.

MUSIC IN THE RHINE LAND.

CHAPTER I.

RHINE SCENERY.

Rhine scenery and its influences—Altenahr—Walk to Laach—Sonnets in the Lower Eifel—Schloss Pyrmont—Schloss Elz—Down the Moselle—The spirit of the country in preparation for its music.

Some of my most sunny musical days, have been those spent in the Rhine land.

It has now become, if not positively difficult, "uneasy" (as the Germans put it) to say a good word for the great river, and the district it traverses. Familiarity has bred contempt for the Drachenfels and Ehrenbreitstein and Loreley's rock and Bishop Hatto's tower. Yet the Rhine is not disenchanted, save to those whose exquisite dread of what is common-place and Cockney, merely proves that the poetry in their souls has a thin, second-hand existence. A Rhine steamer with its cookshop on board is a weary

conveyance to an out-worn Londoner in August,—a place of humiliation to such among us as would fain keep our vulgar and vacant countrymen at home.—The Rhine hotels, with their sleepless polyglott waiters, and banging doors, and jangling bells, offer small "rest to the sole of one's *mind*," betwixt July and October. But those who do not treat the river as a mere highway—persons who can bear to see the floating *caravanserais* crowded with people athirst for Switzerland or Italy or some place more distant and untrodden, ploughing and fuming their way up the rapid stream—and who are willing to loiter and to be left behind—will find a rich repayment in the Rhine-land wherever they choose to trace a stream up its valley, or to circuit the volcanic hills and *weinbergs*, which shut in the great river sometimes with too monotonous a closeness.—I know of no ruin more picturesque in shattered choir and broken cross—more solemn in its leafy seclusion at the foot of one of the Seven Hills—than the destroyed convent church at Heisterbach; within an afternoon's easy reach of Godesberg. There are few more varied walks than the walk from the Apollinarisberg, above Remagen, with its new church, in which

the modern *fresco* painters of Germany are trying to emulate Giotto at Padua and Luini at Saronno, across the hills and through the young woods and the vineyards to Ahrweiler, and thence up the Ahr to Altenahr.—A second and a third day filled with a succession of the most picturesque objects may be enjoyed by the pedestrian, if, after having slept at Altenahr, he will follow my example and strike across the country back towards the Rhine, making the deserted monastery and church, and the mysterious lake of Laach, his destination. Every three or four miles the pilgrim will unexpectedly plunge upon some solitary hamlet or handful of houses in the depths of a cornfield, so remote and lifeless, that the sound of wheel or saw, plied by the unseen cottager, becomes almost startling in the prime of the autumn morning.—Or he may overtake some little pilgrim-band of the hard-featured depressed-looking peasantry, singing their monotonous hymn and murmuring their prayers as they plod onwards "in lagging file." Or he will be stirred, as by the sound of a trumpet, again and again by the unexpected up-springing on the horizon of some pompous old castle or single tower, which he had fancied

he had left behind him hours ago. I recollect, in particular, one grand ruin, Schloss Olbrück, which seemed thus to mock and to meet us during a long morning, from the top of its commanding eminence, under every aspect of shine and gloom, with the blue back-ground of the distant Rhine hills behind it, and which only looked its last upon us, when, after traversing many miles of "rolling country," we approached the dim and ancient beech-wood that girdles the Lake and the Monastery, whither we were bound.—How fantastic and strange, again, is the loneliness and beauty of these! How "eerie" looks the diamond-clear water, with its reeds, its pebbles, and its richly-turfed banks, and that still complete building beside it—as vast and gorgeous as a palace with its oriental minarets and domes, but sepulchrally silent, even on the brightest autumn day. There is a small *wirthshaus* within the precincts of its orchard—and thither may chance to come (as I happen to know) a cargo of resolute Protestant English tourists, who shock the echoes of the forsaken *Basilica* with their sharp unsympathetic voices, and who may end by striking up an Olney hymn, with good hot Calvinistic zeal, thoroughly out of tune. These,

however, I should trust, are not very frequent *incubi*—and the dreamer or sketcher or rhymer, runs a fair chance of enjoying unmolested occupation of this forsaken place—at worst, being questioned by some huge sagacious and courteous hound, who, after a passing salutation, retreats deliberately to his lair under some one of the dark archways; having satisfied himself that the guest is not one of those who come under his suspicion or superintendence as warden.

The spirit of this whole enchanted district may be found in some of Lessing's designs,—such, for instance, as in his little picture of The Knight beside the well, which is in the Stadel Museum at Frankfort—or in a wilder drawing by him which I know, of a summer storm tearing the rebellious woods with its violence, and almost turning back two travellers who are bent on going over the hill past the watch-tower towards the plain. No where have I seen a land fuller of old-world romance and enjoyment and picture; and perhaps I may be forgiven, if into this slight introduction, I weave a verse or two, to show how fondly and deeply the sounds and sights of this delicious district have sunk into my memory, as among the most precious of my holiday recollections.

In the Lower Eifel.

PEASANTS NEAR HANNEBACH.

A louder drone than wild bee's moorland horn
Comes o'er the hill through the calm morning air,
As peasant women, muttering ceaseless prayer,
Plod toward the shrine where holy tear or thorn
Shall lift the load which maiden's heart hath borne,
Or medicine the mother's sick despair,
Who sees her life's one joy, her treasure rare,
Grave-ward by slow mysterious fever worn.
Wherefore should I, in Reason's faith more wise,
Hear that dull murmur with a painful thrill?—
O! not their homely worship I despise!
Nay, rather my distressful fears to still
For those I love mine orisons arise,
And join the humble prayer that wends along the hill.

THE ABBEY OF LAACH.

Come, plunge with me through this green beechen wood;
What wilt thou meet? Some jolly forestere
Erect beneath his freshly-slaughtered deer?—
Some sleeping Paladin, his destrier good
Tied to a tree the while?—perchance intrude
On some blithe dance of Nymphs who revel here
Because no step of prying man they fear—
So lone the haunt, so deep the solitude?—
Nor huntsman, nor brave Knight, nor Dryad free,
But yon proud Abbey by the lake behold
Silent as death, and strange as gramarye;
Yet mellow bells in yonder turrets tolled
When rich St. Bennet's monks, in days of old,
Dozed out luxurious lives, beside this charmed sea.

THE LAKE.

All fairest things a faëry garland make
For this enchanted caldron on the hill.
The cistus spreads its gold—the wild pinks fill
The air with odours—soft wood-pigeons wake
The coy and timid echoes of the lake;
And all day long, the hum—minute and shrill—
Of dragon flies' gold wings is never still,
Where gravely chanted hymn was wont to break
The holy calm. O, on that bank to lie,
In the clear sunshine of an autumn day
Till Fancy, drunk with sweets, began to play
With time, and substance, and reality,
Watching to see the turrets melt away
Of that forsaken church—like pictures in the sky!

From Laach, the pedestrian will easily make his way to Münster Mayfeld, for night-quarters. For his third day's pleasure let him cross to the Elz brook with its wondrous, witch-like windings, and its two castles,—the ruin, Schloss Pyrmont, and the old house, Schloss Elz, so dear to sketchers and water-colourists.—From this, the walk is no less charming—down the shy capricious stream, and across it on stepping-stones, and in and out among forest scenery, perpetually varying in its glimpses and vistas and combinations,—to Moselkern on the Moselle. Here, if it so please the rambler, he may take

the steamer for Coblenz, have done with Nature, and go back to the *lieder-tafel* society, the stringed *quartett*, and the *harmonie musik*.

The above is only one among a hundred accessory yet unfamiliar episodes of a sojourn in the Rhine Land. The Moselle, the Lahn, the Nahe, perhaps, most of all, that lovely and little traversed river the Main, lead, all of them, to haunts of a varied and characteristic beauty, well worth the pilgrim's seeking out, and far too little sought. And those are poor recipients of Art, who care little for those holidays in the midst of Nature, which give a double zest to all creations of imagination and triumphs of intellect, by bracing the nerves, by opening the sympathy, by transporting mind and heart beyond their wonted routine. To me, at least, associations and recollections of this kind, have imparted a peculiar charm and character to all the music I have heard in the Rhine Land. That has been chiefly what may be called festival or exceptional music, thus harmonizing with the spirit of a district which I have found beautiful, joyous, and romantic in no ordinary degree, yet which may be called a land of passage rather than of sojourn.

CHAPTER II.

THE OPERA AT FRANKFORT, 1844.

CHERUBINI'S "MEDEA."

Glance at state of music in Bonn—In Düsseldorf—Mendelssohn's sojourn there, and its close—His attachment to the Rhine Land—His residence near Frankfort in 1844—Performance of Cherubini's "Medea" at the opera of Frankfort—A sketch of the opera, with its difficulties and beauties—Some notice of the execution—General remarks on Cherubini's genius.

SINCE the days when Mannheim possessed its court-chapel, formed by Stamitz, to which the Abbè Vogler was second master—and its musical circle so tempting as to make the young Mozart wish to settle there—the musical temptations of the Rhine Land have been floating rather than fixed,—unless Frankfort, with its opera and singing societies, and Offenbach, for the sake of Herr André's extensive publishing establishment, be included in the circle.

It is curious but true, that in a busy and thriving city like Cologne, the Opera has been always below mediocrity—that, in Beethoven's birthplace, the accomplished university-town of Bonn, the state of habitual stagnation has been long such as to puzzle all who fancied that in Germany, Music must be every where.—During a part of this century, it is true, musical life emanated from Herr Simrock's press there: but when I passed some weeks close to Bonn, at Godesberg, in the autumn of 1843, indifference and inactivity seemed to have come down upon it; and any new music, save some paltry local publication, was hard to find, because in small request there. Neither sun nor customer seemed often to visit the bare counting-room into which, during the three long mid-day hours devoted to dining, smoking and sleeping, the unadvised *fanatico* might have had some difficulty in forcing an entrance, still more in finding any one capable of giving him an intelligent answer, or of receiving a commission.

For a while, it is true, Düsseldorf had a chance of distinguishing itself in the annals of German music, as well as of German painting; since the town was the residence of Mendelssohn

during his first years of professional establishment; and it was at the Lower Rhine Musical Festival, held there at Whitsuntide in the year 1836, that "St. Paul" was produced—its production making that most difficult point in every artist's career, his *second step*.—Then the enterprising few who have committed themselves by prophetic enthusiasm look on with anxiety, while the safer many who dispute the existence of any new genius are maliciously eager to justify former indifference, or selfish exclusiveness, by proving the whole thing to have been a deception and mistake.—Some chill and canker of the kind, there was in the lower Rhine Land for Mendelssohn. He was thwarted, too, in the musical superintendence of the theatre, which had also been entrusted to him: and his Düsseldorf experiences may have been one of the many reasons, why,—singularly averse as he was to personal collision, and utterly incapable of opposing intrigue by intrigue,—he conceived that strong reluctance to theatrical production, which was only beginning, at the time of his death, to give way before the stronger desire of giving vent to thought, passion, and fancy, in the dramatic form. At

all events, weary of his experiment after a short trial, Mendelssohn left Düsseldorf as a resident: and the town relapsed into the nothingness and stagnation from which it may be long ere another like himself shall come to raise it.

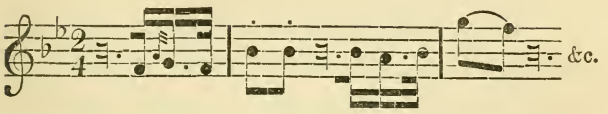
But though Mendelssohn, in leaving Düsseldorf, broke for ever what may be called his official relations with the Rhine Land, his love for the district was such, and his ties to it were so many, as to bring him thither again and again, as a willing sojourner.—It was among the church organs of the villages under the Taunus hills (the name of one "Liederbach," in particular, haunts my ear) that his six organ *Sonatas* were first tried, in the early autumn of 1844.—He was then sojourning at Soden, which little watering-place, though then not popularized by having, as now, its branch railway, was easily accessible from Frankfort;—and found it pleasant to go with the part-singing societies into the wood at Schwanheim,—while the opera-house of the Free Town was most comfortably obliging, and willing, for his pleasure, to perform any opera that he asked for, existing in its repertory.

This repertory was tolerably rich and wide, including such works as the "Unterbrochene Op-

ferfest" of Winter, the "Fernand Cortez" of Spontini, the "Idomeneo" of Mozart,—and (greatest rarity of all) the "Medea" of Cherubini. Though that fine composer, by birth Italian, has always been more thoroughly relished as a composer in Germany, than in his native country, or in the city of his adoption, Paris;—though his "Les Deux Journées" still keeps the stage there (an opera of which it seems impossible to procure a hearing in England), his greatest tragical drama in music, can hardly be said to exist anywhere. It was only retained on the Frankfort list possibly for the purpose of maintaining the dignified and classical character of the theatre. Seldom were the dignity and classicality of "Medea," I suspect, allowed a chance of vindicating themselves to the sprightly audience of men of business, and passing tourists, that attends the Frankfort theatre. And the performance of the opera, that I heard in August 1844, was notoriously a piece of complaisance on the part of Herr Guhr—then the musical director, to Dr. Mendelssohn—being in this respect, too, worthy of commemoration among the pleasant illustrations of artistic intercourse and courtesy in Germany.

I believe that no musician or amateur, who then heard Cherubini's "Medea" for the first time, left the Frankfort theatre, without enthusiastic admiration of the music, and without deep regret that an opera so sublime, should so soon have passed into the rank of those poems written in a dead language, which, though from time to time disinterred and interpreted for the benefit of the scholar, have no longer a popular existence or acceptance.

The music of "Medea," in obedience to the arrangement of the drama, is singular in construction. The opera might be objected to as one too largely made up of *solos* and duetts, were it not for the ingenuity with which the chorus is employed, to heighten and work up several of the movements, so as to conceal the monotony which else must have resulted from such a general want of complication.—After the wild and fiery overture in F minor, known to the frequenters of our classical concerts, the music commences with a chorus of the female attendants of *Dirce*, on a gracefully delicate *motivo*, and deliciously instrumented—the *viole* divided, and the bassoons supporting the second violins in the airy triplets with which they bear

up, and connect, as it were, the *disjecta membra* of a subject thus broken—

This is followed by an air of parade for the chosen bride of *Jason*, which, though brilliantly and buoyantly accompanied, is not effective, owing to the dryness and insufficient interest of the vocal part.—The grand March, which introduces *Creon* (the *basso*), *Jason* (the *tenor*), and the full chorus, is one of Cherubini's stateliest marches, almost approaching the stateliness of Handel. Its dignity and vigour will be best appreciated by comparing it with such a classical march as that by Spontini in "La Vestale." The *solo* of *Jason* addressed to *Dirce* is weak: what composer is there, indeed, who has been able to make the false lover in opera interesting?

There are few things, however, finer in music of any age, than the following *solo*, with chorus and principal voices, in which *Creon* invokes a blessing on the coming nuptials. Here, again, the orchestral portion is rich and sonorous in no common degree,—having that

well-nourished substance in its tenor, or central, part, which the modern race of effect-mongers too largely disdain; rising and swelling into a serene and noble grandeur, befitting a prayer, which was supposed to reach the divinities of Olympus on their thrones of "eternal tranquillity."—This *solo* offers almost the last moment of repose and happiness which is to be found in the opera.—The next scene abruptly introduces the Colchian sorceress, to upbraid and threaten, and in turn to be warned and menaced by *Creon*, who fancies that he has power strong enough to drive the evil influence forth. This is done in a piece of declamatory music, so full of force and judicial terror, that any mortal woman must quail before it, were she even among queens imperious as *Athalia's* self.—Not so, however, *Medea*, the sorceress-sovereign. She allows the storm to break on her head, but it does not bow or bend her. Retaining *Jason* when the rest are gone, she endeavours once again to cast her enchantments round him;—at first by the tale of her sorrow. Her air in F major, $\frac{3}{4}$, —virtually the *sortita* of the *prima donna*,— and a fine specimen of Cherubini's *cantabile* style, has still its singularities.—The abrupt cry,

not to call it jerk, on the word "*ingrat!*" which finishes many of the phrases,—and which unexpectedly starts out, simultaneously with the last notes of the closing symphony,—falls on English ears as one of those bit-by-bit settings of single words, which, however specious, are so false in point of art, when ever, as here, they interfere with the general spirit of the composition. But were this blemish fifty times as great as it is, it would be forgiven and forgotten for the sake of the duett (in E minor) betwixt *Medea* and *Jason*, "*Perfides ennemis*," which closes the first act—one of the most highly wrought and thoroughly sustained explosions of passion existing in opera. The vocal parts are in the most forceful declamatory style, grand and simple, generally broken—yet, where relief is needed, subsiding into large continuous phrases, as on the first introduction of the words—

"*O fatale toison!*"

The orchestra is treated with a fire, an amplitude, an ever-increasing animation and interest, the remembrance of which arrests the breath. The scene may be, perhaps, too long for the possibility of its being adequately supported by the pair who are in dialogue: but who can

wonder if the composer, conscious of such riches of resource, was seduced into excess? On considering it without reference to this practical difficulty, admiration is unbounded, and even with the faltering, exhausted *Medea* and *Jason* before us, whom the Frankfort Theatre afforded, the ear was so borne along, and the attention was so fascinated by that wondrous and brilliant orchestra, as to be incapable for the moment of cavil, question, or regret. The close of this first act of "Medea" is, I repeat, one of the marvels of music; almost in opera, what one of *Lear's* great scenes is in tragedy.

After such a scene, it was impossible to raise the excitement higher—difficult even to recommence. But the force and fervour of Cherubini throughout his "Medea" are remarkable. The instrumental introduction to the second act has an importance and a character which at once compel the ear to listen; and after three short scenes of spoken dialogue, comes the first of two further duetts, in which *Medea* entreats from *Creon* permission to tarry a while longer. To this some variety is given by fragments of dialogue and chorus being

skilfully inwrought, with an excellent courage; heightening the probability of the effect, and animating the scene. Next succeeds an *arietta* for *Néris*, the attendant of *Medea*, deliciously scored, yet felt to be an interruption rather than a repose—a fruitless lull in the storm, which is driving on with its current of wreck and ruin—however musically necessary, to give the principal singer a moment's breathing time. Then comes the last duett betwixt *Medea* and *Jason*, in which the tempest breaks out with a yet wilder fury than before. In this will be observed one of the earliest and finest specimens of the *tremolando*—that expedient since so vulgarized by misuse—here called into play to picture the fever of wretchedness, suspense, dismay, in the deserted *Medea*, and of cowardly shrinking in her false lover. As a whole, however, this duett can in no respect be said to surpass the duett of the first act, as was demanded by the sentiment and the situation. We are now at the grand bridal scene, which sets a seal on the wretched woman's agony. The important portion of this is the religious march and chorus to which the procession moves,—since the central slow movement, or

concerted piece, introduced according to canonical usage, is weak, save at the moment of interruption, when *Medea's* ejaculation*

"*Ecoute aussi ma voix, Hymen, O Hyménée!*"

reminds us that there is present at the banquet a *Fury* who has come thither unbidden. But the march is worthy of all honour and study. All that is known and conjectured of the Greek modes was obviously familiar to Cherubini, as must be felt in the unisonal choral hymn, "*Fils de Bacchus*," and in the ordinance of the instrumental strain which moves in antiphony, contrast, and lastly, in support of it. Those who are curious in the matter, will find much interest in comparing this movement with the Greek religious marches of Gluck. In them the sentiment of beauty is far stronger and sweeter. Cherubini is comparatively antique, remote—in some measure cold. I have heard this ingeniously accounted for on the hypothesis that the trouble in the rite caused by the presence of *Medea* had entered his mind—that he wished to paint the bridal torches

* This (strangely enough) is *spoken*: the orchestra alone giving the sinister contrast required.

dimmed, and the garlands withered, and the flutes and recorders turned to unconscious wailing, by the spell of her ill-boding presence. But to me this is a far-fetched solution—a theory made after the fact. These impressions of coming gloom and ruin should be projected (so to say) across the scene from *Medea's* self, but not mingle with it. Or if the voices of the singers should be afraid on seeing that pale witness of their praise and prayer, the hymn itself should have no fear. A right conception of the moment would vividly contrast the jubilation of the people and the pent-up wrath of the avenger,—not fuse them together. But this, again, as Sir Thomas Browne says, "is philosophy;" and the *rationale* of the character of this music, I imagine to lie in no such subtle distinctions and conceptions as the above considerations embrace, so much as in the individual nature of Cherubini, to which sweetness (as distinguished from *dryness*) seems to have been sparingly given. The impression of beauty produced by his works is, comparatively speaking, faint and rare; in Gluck's operas, it is everywhere. Yet the scene is, to the close of the act, of very high quality; and

the final burst with which *Medea* rushes to the altar, and snatches thence a blazing brand, besides being dramatically fine as carrying expectation forward, makes another of those declamatory moments of which this great part is only too full. When I saw it on the stage, it brought back to me those lines from Barry Cornwall's poem to Pasta—

> "Now thou art like some winged thing that cries
> Above some city, flaming fast to death."

There still remains the consummation of *Medea's* vengeance, the triumph of her power which tramples beneath its feet her own remorse, in its fiendish resolution to immolate and to destroy. This would seem to have been the favourite portion of the opera with its composer. The "death and wild despair" with which it is filled are "lengthened out" with a vengeance. The Storm-prelude with which it opens (one of the finest storms in music which exists — Beethoven's "Pastoral *Symphony*" not forgotten), has almost the development of a grand *overture*, occupying twenty pages of the score. From the time that *Medea* appears on the scene, in the midst

of this tumult of the elements, she is never again allowed to quit the stage. The remainder of the opera consists of two *scenas* for her, both on the grandest scale; the first with her children—the second as the triumphant *Nemesis*, dealing destruction round her. To point out all the noble passages with which these tremendous scenes are filled, and the manner in which the composer's inspiration was always present to himself, always equal to the moment, is not possible. The examples of declamatory music which they contain are only exceeded by Gluck, inasmuch as he could render force as violent, and frenzy as tempestuous, with a larger admixture of beauty. But, on the other hand, the instrumental portion has a *verve*, a variety, and a might, which, at the period when Gluck wrote, were undiscovered. There is nothing in Beethoven's "Fidelio" worthier of close study and fervent admiration. One hundred years hence it will remain to be as new as the organ-music of Bach, as the choral fugues of Handel, as the melodies of Mozart, are now. Perhaps, then, it may be like them resorted to as a frequent object of delight, comparsion, and instruction. The practicability of the work

may be then laid out of consideration, and the countless examples it contains of skill, grandeur, and freedom of vigour, may be relished and considered as they deserve.

Such being a few among the excellences of this noble work, — the one classical opera of more recent date than Gluck's, in which the grandeur of Gluck is approached—the universal avoidance, if not positive oblivion, into which it has fallen, are worth considering with reference to their causes. It cannot be said that "Medea" has passed from the stage, because of the world's resolution to have no more Grecian stories. Long after it had vanished thence, Simone Mayer's weaker music on the same fable, ill arranged enough, drew crowds to every opera house in Europe, to see the Colchian queen and sorceress presented by Pasta.* More lately still have we seen the life of old French classical tragedy asserted by Mademoiselle Rachel. Nay, to take the strongest and most conclusive instance possible, can it be forgotten, how when a translation of the "Antigone" was played a

* And what a presentation was that!—not to be adverted to by anyone professing to treat the musical drama, even as above (episodically and for the sake of illustration), without a word or two of

few years since in a London theatre, for the sole purpose of introducing Mendelssohn's choruses to the tragedy, which were then a novelty—

homage strong as sincerity can make it. There has never been any opera-singer in the memory of man so queenly as Pasta—so grandly measured and grandly brilliant in musical style—so loftily graceful, without affectation, in her demeanour. And this was of all her parts the most queenly: for in *Medea* she was doubly a sovereign—over the world of infernal spirits, as well as of subjugated human beings. Yet never was vengeful hate, arising out of passion the most consuming, if not the most tender, so vividly personified. When the Woman stood at the corner of the stage, watching the bridal scene betwixt *Jason* and *Creusa* proceeding, with her royal mantle haughtily folded round her superb arms, there was something of the *Medusa* in her port, and in her look. One *saw* the cauldron made ready for the poison! When later, the Mother, as well as the Lover, claimed her terrible place in her sacrifice of vengeance—when the children of the Sorceress were to die by her hand, because they were also, the children of the faithless mortal by whom she had been slighted—the fearful struggle of the scene, never excluded the grandeur of the great Princess, in whose breast it was raging. There was the terrible beauty of one of the *Fates* of old mythology, in the look and gesture with which Pasta used to hide the weapon of murder from herself, under her long floating hair, as she tottered across the stage to consummate her awful crime. I might fancy that the intense impression which these things have left on me, was a first symptom of that dotage which finds small pleasure except in pleasures which are gone, had I not recently seen instances of a like spirit, working its way in Opera, by means of physical powers and musical qualities totally different—but still as fervid, as ripe, as solid, and as subduing—in Madame Viardot Garcia.—1852.

though the music failed to please, owing to inefficient execution, the drama attracted delighted crowds, night after night, to witness its representation? For every genuine creation of which a reasonably good interpretation is possible, there is always, I firmly and increasingly believe, a public to be found: a public willing to allow for the taste of an olden time, to be patient with some tediousness, to show humility in accepting that which is strange. But Cherubini's "Medea" hardly comes within the circle of works thus described. It is an opera, of which the fair execution (as we now understand the word) is hardly possible.

I have never seen or heard on the stage an actress, who, supposing her to command the requisite tragical requisites for the part of *Medea*, had physical power to execute Cherubini's music—with the exception of Madame Stöckl Heinefetter, and (possibly) Mademoiselle Cruvelli. I am told by old German operagoers, that this *Medea* was one of Madame Milder's grand parts; but no one (not even Madame Schröder Devrient in her best day) seems precisely to have replaced Madame Milder. Even before the tremendous third

act commenced, the zealous young lady (Fräulein Neuther) to whom the part was allotted at Frankfort, sank into a state of utter impotent weariness, which, however justifiable, was totally fatal to the closing portion of the tragedy. From this there is no deliverance by strong will —none by the most exquisite musical culture. Once in a century may come a Catalani with a voice, as it were, like a clarion, and a frame made of adamant and gold, — of everything that is most enduring and precious,—capable of undergoing the strain and fatigue of such a long display of unmeasured emotion—but, after Catalani's compass and lungs are found, we must then ask for Pasta's grandeur of expression, and delicacy of reading, and statuesque sublimity of altitude, and withering scorn, and fearful vengeance, and maternal remorse—ere the creation of the musician can be rightly filled up. The charming songstress and capital actress* to whom the part of *Medea* was confided

* The publisher of the fine French edition of the score of "Medea" dedicated his work to this lady, who is described as having been the main support of the *Opéra Comique* of Paris at the close of the past and the commencement of the present century, during

on the production of that work at the *Opéra Comique* in Paris, in 1797—Madame Scio—died in the prime of her glory of a pulmonary affection, which, it has been said, was exasperated, if not brought on, by her singing in this very opera. It must be further owned, that the entire part is written most ungraciously for the voice—that besides its merciless length and demand upon the energies, it perpetually claims qualities which are not vocal;—in this how different from the music of Handel, of Gluck, of Mozart, of all the great Germans, in short, who have thoroughly

which period some of the best serious works of the best French writers were produced there,—ineligible for the *Grand Opéra*, merely because the recitative was spoken, and because they contained no *ballet*.—"Among the works," says M. Fétis, "which owed a part of their success to the talent of Madame Scio, were 'La Caverne,' 'Romeo et Juliette,' 'Telemaque,' 'Montano et Stéphanie,' 'Medée,' 'Léonore, ou l'Amour Conjugal,'" (the last being the story reset in Beethoven's "Fidelio").—"The pure and metallic quality of Madame Scio's voice," says the same authority, "her musical instinct, the expression of her singing, and her dramatic intelligence, made up, as a whole, one of the finest artists who had ever appeared at the *Opéra Comique*. The principal parts in the most important works were entrusted to her, and such was the perfection with which she sustained them, that none of the songstresses who attempted them afterwards, could abide the comparison."

understood the means which they have had to employ, and who have known that Greatness bends to its materials—does not break them! That a man who, like Cherubini, was born in Italy, and who had commenced his career not merely by patching Italian operas, but by composing in the modish Italian style, should have ever arrived at so murderous a disregard of his singers, seems at first sight curious.—Yet his is not a solitary phenomenon. A like cruelty to the voices (though less in its degree) may be complained of in Spontini's operas. The want of sweetness in the nature of the artist, which universal testimony ascribes to Cherubini, may have caused this want of concession and charm in his music; and if it rendered himself moody, sarcastic, unsympathising with the young and harsh among his contemporaries, it has done him the greater wrong of interposing a fatal barrier betwixt his great and magnificent ideas, and the world that is in no wise averse to anything great or magnificent.

It was sad, I repeat, on leaving the Frankfort opera-house—after an evening so signally to be marked with a white stone in the calendar of holidays—to be satisfied that there were few reasonable

chances of ever hearing Cherubini's "Medea" again, and fewer chances still of ever hearing it executed in anything like accordance with the power and poetry of the composer.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEETHOVEN-FESTIVAL AT BONN, 1845.

Dr. Liszt's reputation in Germany—Some character of him as a player, an artist, and a man—His sojourn in the Rhine-Land —Serenade at Mayence—Talk of a Beethoven statue at Bonn —Dr. Liszt's engagement to complete it—Jealousy and indifference on the occasion—Want of a suitable locality—The *Fest-Halle*— The *Festival* — Journey to Cologne — The aspect of Bonn—The dinners at "the Star." — Dona Lola Montes—The visit of the Queen of England to Germany— Her arrival at Bruhl—The serenade given to her there—A word about "Harmony-Music"—The inauguration of Beethoven's statue in the *Dom-Platz*—Procession to the Minster— Odd costumes—The subsequent ceremonies in the open air— The illuminations at night—Artistic jealousies—The offence taken by M. E——, of Paris.

It was about the year 1839, that a stir began to be made in Europe by the tour of one of the greatest pianists that ever lived: whose genius, however, has been manifested more remarkably without, than within, the circles of strict and

orderly art. I need hardly name Dr. Liszt. There have been few things in executive music in any respect comparable to his public career, which may be here spoken of, because it is understood to have closed so far as exhibition is concerned, and to be merged in enterprises of creative and critical activity. Brilliant in his wit, extravagant in his habits of life and opinion, courted for his personal fascination by every one who is greatest in rank and choicest in intellect, as Dr. Liszt has been, from his prodigious youth upward,—the fine judgment and the firm resolution which have enabled him to see that there is a time for every thing—a time to give up exhibition, and to enter upon more meditative pursuits—to cease from display at the moment when his popularity was the highest, when no rival was in hearing—I may say more, in being—such a whim of wisdom (if whim it be) must be commemorated as among the most remarkable passages and traits of his remarkable life and character.

At the time I refer to, on the continent of Europe Dr. Liszt commanded the whole world of gentle and simple listeners as no other instrumentalist ever commanded it before him. For such

love and personal regard as he inspired, must not be confounded with the wonderment and curiosity that follow an eccentric like Paganini. Whereas the great Italian violin-player was a gloomy and hypochondriacal egotist, inapt and ill at ease in society, penurious in his personal habits, giving most reluctantly, and in rare spasms,—Liszt seemed to live for every distinguished man and every beautiful woman, and with every joyous thing—to have wit to spare for every one, and kindliness to lavish upon *too* many ;—since, well-a-day! potentates so accessible as he are sure to be pressed upon by the scum, as well as by the salt, of the earth. While he appeared to come to his music as a sport, a *hors d'œuvre*, a light pastime, he made of his music an engine of beneficence more princely, in proportion to its gains, than Art has ever seen.

That such a character, however dazzling—that such a position, however delicious—are not the highest which an artist can claim, and should aspire to, is a truth past controversy. There is a munificence which lays waste and troubles, as much as it fertilizes and aids—which resolves itself into the gratification of glorious and affectionate and poetical impulses, without care for

the consequences. But in days of selfish and grasping agitation like ours, we must not too curiously arraign such over-profusion, when we know it to be accompanied by those smaller virtues and graces—that gentleness to the humble—that memory of small services—that noble superiority to anything like pique or littleness, to which every one can bear testimony who has known Dr. Liszt through a series of years. The wonder is, that a prodigious childhood, succeeded by a prodigious adolescence, passed in such a *Pandemonium* as Paris, have left so much of the man, so much of the friend, so much of the affectionate heart, so much of the fine appreciation of persons widely differing from himself, as Dr. Liszt enjoys, and makes others enjoy. There are people in whose cases it is idle to compare, to lecture—whom it is worse than idle to imitate—yet to whom one's whole heart goes out, in recognition of the treasury of rich gifts and gracious sympathies, which they retain and distribute in spite of every strange and disturbing influence;—and Dr. Liszt is of the number.

There was hardly, in 1845, an artist for whom he had not played—whom he had not helped. One day, when I first sojourned in the Rhine

Land, he was down in Cologne, "giving his penny" (to use his own phrase) in aid of the fund for the works at the Cathedral;—the next, toiling across the country (and German posting *was* then still a toil) to contribute his astounding "Hexameron" *fantasia*, and his "Tarentelles," and his "Galoppe Infernale," to the sober establishment of a *gymnasium* at Dortmund;—or assisting, with all his generous heart and might and energy, in shaping a career for a young English songstress, against whom chance for a moment seemed to have barred most openings at home;—or lavishing a concert on some miserable Italian piece of pantaloonery on two legs, who could sing a very little, and could make him laugh by magpie wit, and impudence, and knavery.—No wonder that for such a wondrous and fascinating man (of whom, to boot, Rumour had its good store of romances to tell), dear, sentimental German girls wore bracelets made of the pianoforte strings which he broke in his frenzy!—No wonder that serenades, and torch processions, and wreaths of flowers on his desk, and every conceivable gift that German taste can devise, seemed to spring up wherever he went—that poor scholars limped on sore feet a

score of miles to look at him, that dames of High Transparency "flung themselves at his head."—I shall not soon forget a lovely autumn evening at Mayence, with the full harvest moon looking down into the quiet and brimming Rhine, when the military bands from Castel came across the bridge, and, establishing themselves beneath Liszt's window at the *Hotel de Rhin*, treated him to such a serenade as no money could buy in England. The picturesque light on the parti-coloured uniforms—the hearty delight of the players over a few bottles of Rhine wine, sent out to them—the glory and spirit of the open-air music below (one piece being an overture for wind-instruments by Mendelssohn little known in England)—and the wit and cordiality in the balcony, where Liszt stood, looking at once *blasé* and sarcastic, and touched by a homage so totally unexpected ;—such sights and impressions were with him of daily and nightly occurrence. The years of man's life to which they belong pass like dreams, or the vapours from wine, or else a *Methusaleh's* age would be too short for the mere retrospect of a period so brilliant, so crowded, so joyous, so noisy—with all its magic scenes and strange transformations.

But quieter folk who have caught glimpses at such a career, have good matter for many a rainy day's "recollection," when the time shall come for them at which nothing is found comparable to "the times that have been!"

And then, as a player, Liszt rises up above his mates as something of a different genius, a different race, a different world, to every one else who has handled the piano. He is not to be considered among the great composers also pianists—who have merely treated their instrument as an interpreting medium;—but as a Poet who executively employed the piano as his means of utterance and materials for creation. In mere mechanical skill, after every one else has ended, Liszt had still something to add—he could carry every man's discovery further: could exhibit it in new forms. If he was surpassed by Thalberg in richness of sound, he surpassed Thalberg by a variety of tone of which the redoubtable and equable Viennese player never dreamed. He had his delicate, and light, and freakish moods (as when playing the "Ständchen" of Schubert, or his transcripts of the *Tarentellas* and *Calascionate* of Naples) in which he may be remembered as another Chopin for

every quality of fancy, sentiment, and faëry brilliancy which made Chopin so delicious. In sweep of hand and rapidity of finger — in fire and in fineness of execution—in the power over those exquisite momentary fancies and graceful touches which, when the music admits it, add so much to its charm—in a memory so vast and comprehensive as to seem almost superhuman—in a lightning quickness of view, enabling him to penetrate instantaneously the meaning of a new composition, and to light it up properly with its own inner spirit (some touches of his own brilliancy added)—in a mastery, complete, spontaneous, enjoying and giving enjoyment, over every style and every school of music—all those who have ever heard Liszt frequently, will join with me in saying he was unapproached among executant instrumentalists.

The above are a few of the characteristics of the next distinguished artist after Mendelssohn, whose name will be remembered as connected with music in the Rhine Land. He, too, in a way widely different from Mendelssohn, loved the district with its cheerful towns and old ruins, and joyous vineyards; he, too, caught its spirit; he, too, had his dream of settling

there for life. He was to buy a faëry island, on which a palace of Art was to be built.—He, too, had his own part in the works at Cologne Cathedral, to which he had been a munificent contributor; and in the progress of his sojourn under the Seven Hills, and of his travels to and fro, another strong interest more immediately appealing to a musician, began to rise on him, which, with one who welcomes sensations so eagerly, and adopts interests so warmly,—presently became a purpose, a passion, and a duty.

It may be some dozen years ago or thereabouts that the musicians and amateurs of Germany began to fancy that a statue of Beethoven, in Beethoven's birth-place, would be a creditable object. And, accordingly, they came together, and opened a subscription; planned, and spoke, and clinked glasses, and sang; making some small progress in preparation. Then the idea was allowed to doze, after the fashion of Germany. For the enthusiasm of that many-sided, and many-coloured, and many-peopled land, holds "moveable feasts." It is apt to ebb, to abate, to dry up in one channel, when any new one, offering more charming opportunities of self-illustration—to wit, of planning, speaking, clink-

ing glasses, and singing—shall open itself. In what manner, or by whom the eager beginning, and the slack continuation, of the scheme were brought before Liszt, I cannot tell. Enough that he asked what had been done, and why matters "dragged their slow length along," and on being told that want of funds was the hindrance, he announced his intention of making up the *deficit* single-handed, out of the profits of concerts to be given. *Not* strange to say, the enthusiasts, glad to be rid of the responsibility, accepted his offer with acclamation,—for acclamation is perhaps the most cheap and comfortable exercise of generous feeling which can be made. Not strange to add, Liszt kept his word. His concerts were given; the money was handed over to the committee; the commission for the statue was entrusted to Herr Hähnel, of Dresden; and the inauguration festival was appointed for the month of August, 1845.

It seemed as if it had been fated, that, from first to last, in the arrangement of this *Apotheosis*, there should be trouble, jealousy, intrigue, indifference, and ill-report. It was found by those who had stood by and done nothing, that Liszt was put too forward in the business; and

hence, certain great musicians, averse to taking any but the principal part, utterly refused to co-operate in, or be present at, the Festival. Then came the visit of our Queen and the Prince Consort to Germany, still further to traverse all engagements, to turn all heads, and to give all recusant singers—averse, like the *maestri*, to self-effacement—an excuse for not singing music which offered them small opportunity for shining, save by self-effacement.—Further, when the *programme* was somehow or other drawn out —the valuable assistance of Dr. Spohr, as joint conductor with Liszt, secured—the form of the ceremonial, and the pieces of music to be executed, determined upon — a difficulty, which would have been foreseen anywhere save in *Gotham* city, suddenly sprang up to confront and to confound all who desired that the Festival should succeed.—In the middle of July, it was discovered, for the first time, that Bonn had no room in which the musical performances could take place. One expedient after another was recommended—one fusty room after another proposed, with those anxious promises "that it should be made to look handsome," which say so much to the experienced. Luckily, how-

ever, Liszt had a voice in the matter. "We must have a room built on purpose," said he. "And where is the money to come from? Who is to pay for it?" replied the wise men of Bonn, in amazement at so dashing a proposal. "I will, if the Festival fails," was Liszt's answer.

Such an "*I will*" as this, of course, silences all further objection. By good fortune, Bonn is only now one hour distant from Cologne; and the latter city, in Herr *Baumeister* Zwirner (the head architect of the new works at the Cathedral), possesses a master-spirit, at once experienced, energetic, and having a staff of competent workmen under his command.—A waste plot of garden ground in a suitable situation was at once pitched upon; the trees were grubbed up; the earth was levelled; timber was fished up out of one of the great Rhine rafts; decorations were made at Cologne; and the *Fest-Halle* rose like a palace in a faëry tale. In such temporary buildings, I have often thought the Germans expend their entire stock of taste. Assuredly never did concert-room answer its purpose better: few have ever been so thoroughly picturesque. The *Fest-Halle* was an oblong apartment, nearly three hundred feet in

length, with a nave defined by two rows of fourteen arches each. The roof, with its timbers displayed in the old fashion, was tinted a pale blue: the beam-work was liberally festooned with those rich garlands of oak leaves which one sees no where else save in Germany. Up the pillars, which were so many fir-trees merely trimmed—not shaped and planed—ivy had been trained: the walls were hung with a cool pale-red paper, the effect of which, seen from a distance, and in such quantity, was almost that of a warm and delicately-tinted marble.—As might have been expected, the resonance of the edifice thus constructed was entirely satisfactory.

But this magically-erected building was not to be reached without something of adventure. For an adventure it was, to travel from Ostend to Cologne, on the 9th of August, 1845. The trials of patience which await the average summer tourist on that most intolerable and worst managed of railroads—the heat, the dust, the pressure in uneasy carriages—the stupid incivility of the Belgian officials, the more stupid formality of the Prussian custom-house officers on the frontier—the confusions of many trains from many places meeting at given points, and few, if any,

keeping their time—all these pleasant incidents of travel were doubled in the vivacity of their interest, by their taking place (as it were) in the midst of a fair kept by half the literary men, artistic ladies, and great personages of London, Paris, and the holy Roman empire.—To make that day's journey was very like running the gauntlet for a seat in a railway carriage, in the midst of every body whom one had ever seen or heard of. Here might be encountered a group of swan-like English ladies, bending, and bowing, and waiting, and all but left behind because of their politeness, in the midst of whom a well known anonymous *bel esprit* stood enjoying the confusion.—There, in the plenitude of ministerial importance, and that touching simplicity which may sometimes be confounded with cool self assertion, a foreign cabinet Councillor and diplomatist was seen carrying his own red box in order that he might have the pleasure of studying publicly in the railway carriage, the rough draft of a Constitution which the aforesaid red box contained.—Next would come up, shouting, gesticulating, astoundingly dressed (and some of them esquiring not very dubious gentlewomen), a troop and tribe of bearded Frenchmen, who

were going through the journey with the violence of people to whom any journey, save from Paris to Versailles, was strange. What cigar-smoking was there!—what perpetual introducing!—what screams of surprise when there was nothing to astonish, and of recognition among people who had parted but the evening before!—The railway platform at Verviers was that day as fine a place for studying the full meaning of the word "*tapage*" as the holiday world has ever presented. As we drew nearer and nearer to Aix, the crowd grew thicker and thicker, more noisy, and worse tempered. Some of us had to rough it for a stage or two on the steps of the railway carriages; some with laps, by Nature meant to hold only one tenant, were cajoled into accommodating two and a half!—Some (chiefly French these) had lost their passports, or had come without.—And then we had a perpetual incoming and outpouring of the anxious, overworked, distracted officials, set in busy motion by the expected coming of our Queen of England, and the arrival of her Cousin of Prussia at the small palace of Brühl, half way betwixt Cologne and Bonn, to give her welcome to Germany. One or two of the station-houses had already half

got into their finery: in many of the tunnels, we rushed by mysterious avenues of green boughs, brought thither to be illuminated when our Sovereign Lady should pass.

I think I never met so many brass instruments—horns, trumpets, *cornets-à-piston*, trombones, *ophicleides*, *saxophones*, and other engines of musical festivity—on a journey, as on that railroad on that day. Even "the Star" at Bonn, swarming like a hive as it was, and all night long as noisy as the stage behind the scenes on the first night of a new pantomime—with its two, three, four, for aught I know, twenty bedded rooms—seemed a harbour of placid calm and gentle repose, after that frantic day on the Belgian and Prussian railroads.

As to the little dull University town itself, the best description of its aspect in the morning when we woke and walked out, was that furnished by an ingenious guest, who proposed to buy a view of the place, and paint it across with blue, scarlet, and white lines, on a green ground.—The buildings were positively covered with flags streaming in the wind, over walls of oak and alder boughs; many of the houses,

being profusely decorated with rich green garlands; among others, of course, the house where Beethoven was born, a forlorn and grim mansion in the *Rhein Gasse*, the dirt of which looked all the drearier for the furbishing-up. In cradle less fragrant did Genius never see the light. How curious was the illustration of that undying and universal fame, which becomes a fashion with the frivolous, as well as a faith with the sincere, furnished by the stream of pilgrims from almost every country, who thought it part of the show to go and look at Beethoven's birth-place—some with sarcasm, some with tears, the best with silence!—This done, the generality of the guests turned into the *Fest-Halle*, to be present at the rehearsal. Of the music performed there, it may be best to speak separately.

After the rehearsal, creature-comforts were to be cared for:—and those wonderful dinners at "The Star" for four hundred and fifty people, made too important a feature in the week to be forgotten. Two mortal hours and a half long at the least, and managed with a military discipline and exactness that was over-awing by its precision, they live in my memory as among

the most singular and pleasant meals of which I ever partook.—It will not do to think of the companion in all his prime of life and intelligence and promise and enjoyment,—whose ready sympathy and quiet humour gave a zest to every oddity, and a solution for every inconvenience, and an additional goodness of good cheer to the ample provision made for that monstrous party!—He is gone: but forms too vivid a presence in that strange scene to be wholly passed over.—I fancy that I now hear the wranglings of the guests as they fought their way to their places,—the screaming mirth of Dona Lola Montes (who had then not bethought herself of "Bavaria" and was only doing a little promiscuous gambling up and down the Rhine, wherever there was an assemblage of company).—I think I see the observant face of the English divine, who having walked demurely round the table where she sat, ascertained that *Time* had already "thinned her flowing hair," and mentioned the baldness when he came back as a precious fact to be noted.—I think I see the gigantic baskets, piled with cannon-balls of reserve bread—in quantity, enough to stand a siege—which somehow, ere the tenth course

came, were utterly emptied.—I think I hear the peremptory bell, which, as every new course was ready, called out the army of waiters, who returning anon in quick step, charged the tables with some fresh, unspeakable dish; for which, somehow, every one found room (how we *did* eat in the Rhine Land!) I think I hear how the scene grew noisier and noisier as the banquet went on:—and how there were greetings from far and near, at the top and bottom of the table, from lungs of every country, and the clinking of glasses, and the explosion of champagne corks; and, in progress of time, the bursting out of smoke in a hundred places, accompanied by a sudden scraping of chairs as our outraged island ladies made their retreat.—Will there be ever such days—ever such dinners again?—Of course, I believe *not:* but, in truth, they were mad and strange and noisy and long enough—and, what was wonderful, all the dishes at them were kept tolerably hot!

It was a relief to get out of Bonn, for a morning hour, and to hear the wind roaring among the old fir-trees on the *Kreuzberg* hill,—and, skirting the ridge of which it forms the last, to refresh the spirits with the delicious view from

Godesberg up the Rhine towards the Seven Mountains,—one of the finest landscapes in that lovely and cheerful district. But, after such a lull, the storm set in with a vengeance. Every train and steamer brought its cargo of new acquaintances or new celebrities — every hour its fresh rumour concerning, not merely the Festival, but also the Royal Progress of Her Majesty our Queen, and the gorgeous and cordial welcome which was in store for her. — Now it was to be an illumination *a giorno* of the Cathedral at Cologne.—Now it was the unparalleled concerts in preparation at Stolzenfels on the Rhine. — Now it was a serenade to be given on her reception at Brühl; which may be called a frontier-house belonging to His Majesty the King of Prussia, half way betwixt Cologne and Bonn.

This we were resolved to hear: and it proved well worth the hearing and the waiting for —though the waiting proved something of the weariest.—The scramble to reach the point of attraction was no easy business in a land where railway administration is generally slack, formal, and tedious; and where, betwixt the curiosity of sight-seeing and the unprecedented influx of

passengers, the poor, ill-trained officials had utterly, it seemed, lost their wits. After we had arrived at Brühl, we had three mortal hours of pacing to and fro in front of the palace—of watching the troops gradually mustered and marshalled, and of keeping up talk to keep off weariness—happy they whose party was as well provided with material as ours! Some of us, however, had reached that exhausted state which is not far from sullen ill-humour, when at last the painful screech of the steam-whistle, the frantic hurrying of the crowd towards the railway-station, and the sudden getting into order of the troops on duty, made it evident that the Guest was at hand: and a few seconds afterwards the train from Cologne darted in sight, and stopped. Then, those wondrous, shabby old equipages that had been so long in waiting (vehicles in which one could fancy riding only such potentates as the *Queen of Hearts* with her flower, and the *King of Spades* with his knightly falchion) floundered and plunged their way back to the Palace, with their precious freight. Next one might hear a sound reminding one of those announcing sunrise in the country—a sudden solitary flute or

clarionet trying its voice, and then suddenly stilled: next (for it was now blue summer twilight) a hundred Chinese lanterns ranged within the *facade* of the heavy old palace, which is in a form like this, ⊓, burst into full glow. The windows of the grand apartments were seen to open, — forms passed and paused, — and the serenade began, played by four hundred wind instruments and one hundred drums.

I have never heard any thing so pompous as that sound. Some piece it was, I think, by Herr Wiprecht, a renowned Prussian band-master, which was first played, with an introduction of slow chords, spreading, and rising, and increasing in volume, till the old poetical phrase of "filling the sky" bade fair to be realized.—Our own "Rule Britannia," too, was given with every conceivable glory, save that nationality which not even a Prussian band-master can inspire into his myrmidons. That which our unisonal chant of charity-children in St. Paul's, London, did by Haydn, this serenade at Brühl did by me—produced the strongest emotion of nervous pleasure which I have ever experienced from Music; an emotion that drew tears, when assuredly there was nothing

either in the scene or the serenade to cause weeping.

Whence comes such a strong physical effect as this?

It would be interesting were some profound and poetical analysist to aid us in considering why the sound of military—or, as the Germans call it, *harmony*—music,—should so often be intensely, lusciously melancholy; even when the strain is the proudest and most triumphant. This can be no result of association, but a specific effect operated on the nerves—since it can be produced by examples as wide apart in character as the slow movement to the "Freischütz" *Overture*—as that dread yet brilliant burst of sound with which, in Weber's *Overture* to "The Ruler of the Spirits," the second subject is enunciated when it is repeated for the second time—as the *trio* of the *menuetto* in Beethoven's A major *Symphony*—as (to return to my immediate subject) those rapid and animated "*pas redoubles*," or "defile marches," with which the superb band assembled at Brühl made the court of that little shabby old palace ring and re-echo. The theory of inherent sadness, or the reverse, in certain musical sounds or keys, is hardly a safe

one. A bassoon, dreariest of ghostly drones, when employed by a Meyerbeer in the cloister scene of "Robert le Diable," to accompany the unhallowed resurrection of the frail sisters of *St. Rosalie* — shall become a humorous, nay, almost a brisk heightener of some scene of boor's mirth, if it be rightly taken in hand by another composer. Handel in his *Dead Marches* —particularly that fine one in "Samson"—shall evoke deeper and grander solemnity through the medium of a common major key, than Spohr can do when, for expression's sake, he uses five, six, or seven flats minor! Possibly no theory is to be given for effects so totally disproportioned to their causes; but the masters of Music have found them by instinct, and have known where to give the last enhancement of pleasure to their most festive compositions, by mellow tints and pensive glories, such as are analogous (if Fancy may be allowed a flight) to the splendours of the burning west at evening—how magnificent, how rich,—but how tender, also, and how sad! *

* * * * *

* It is possible that I may have a reader or two to whom the above may seem something more than mere rhapsody—striking the chord of sympathies which they may have felt, without

To get back to Bonn that night was as strong a disenchantment from all such high-flown delights as if *Mephistopheles* had planned it. Fortunate were those who did get back to Bonn: since, in the confusion of the hour, there were some hundreds who, in spite of explanatory screams, oaths, protestations, and directions, were whisked off to the city of the Three Kings instead of their real resting place.—It was long past "the small hours" before "The Star" went to bed—to be up, as is the custom with German hotels, little after day-dawn.

Exhausting as were all these sights, sounds, and screams, coming in such rapid succession, they, nevertheless, had the effect of sufficiently working us up into a due state of excitement for what might be called the consummation of this Festival—the inauguration of the statue of Beethoven in the *Dom Platz*.—The day began with service in the Minster, at which Beethoven's

expressing them. I could go a step further in such company, and ask them whether certain descriptive passages in our imaginative literature have not also produced in them the same sort of powerful and delicious trouble, bearing no reference to the scene described?—such an one, for instance, as the description of *Queen Elizabeth's* arrival at Kenilworth in Scott's romance, which is as grand after its kind as that Brühl Serenade.

Mass in C, I am told, was finely performed. But my enjoyment was in the scene without, watching the procession which swept across the *Dom Platz*—a sight such as could not be matched on any other occasion, or in any other country; since not only was it precious and interesting to overlook such a vast gathering of musical celebrities, to see filing past one remarkable man after another whose face bore tokens of thought, labour, and grave participation in the object of the meeting—but something was to be gathered from the fillings-up of the *cortège*. The German loves dressing up on all occasions, but the German student especially. His every-day protest in favour of Freedom meant (in those days at least) liberty to wear his hair half down his back, and his shirt (if shirt there was) open, so as to show his naked chest down to the waist;—to indulge in coats of the most caricatured fashion—caps the like of which no brother in smoke and beer had ever dreamed of—a cane, or cudgel, no less rudely and curiously devised—and a pipe bedecked with the portrait of some *Cynthia* tipsily enamelled in all her seductions.—But this was a state occasion, to be honoured as such in all the triumph of masquerade; and we had

barrel caps with dirty feathers, such as may be seen on *Romeo* outside the booth at a fair; and velvet Van Dyck coats, and scarves of all manner of gay colours, paraded on wearers whose fervour was only equalled by their want of cleanliness. The obese, and the sullen, and the spectacled youths that swept into the Minster, truly satisfied with such a precious caparison as I have described, are another feature of that curious meeting not to be forgotten.—The procession was closed by a troop of Lancers.—At last it wound its way into the Minster, and the doors were shut; and there was half an hour of comparative quiet, and time to breathe — if breathe one could on one of the most oppressively hot mornings of August, that the oldest Rhinelander remembered.

Tennyson has told us how charming it is to listen to music—

> "where the sunshine laves
> The lawn by some cathedral."

Even the gradual putting together of the crowd in the *Dom Platz* did not wholly hinder a part of the noblest Catholic service in existence from reaching the platform which had been raised round the statue for the accommodation of

the spectators. With this interest by way of aid, the time did not seem long. In front of the veiled statue were the female choristers (mostly amateurs), who had given their services to the Festival:—behind them were the tenors and basses. A reading desk stood on one side of the area, and ranged round the pedestal was a rifle troop, with their pieces loaded; for the Germans must have the baptism of fire on such occasions. One space after another, betwixt the dwarf linden-trees that are ranged in the *Platz*, filled rapidly with groups of eager gazers; presently, too, the company from the Minster poured forth. It appeared strange that the musicians were not kept more together, in order that they might form a distinct feature on the occasion; but betwixt bad management on the part of the Committee, and ill-judged self-importance on the part of the guests, it seemed, alas! as if the musicians had come to Bonn for the express purpose of keeping asunder one from the other. Then, a neighbouring balcony, flounced and furbelowed for the reception of royal guests, was a great counter attraction to the veiled statue. Time passed:—twelve o'clock approached, and the company began to grow restless. At length,

the screech of the steam-whistle on the neighbouring railroad, and the jangling of the loud and heavy-toned bells, announced that the royal guests had arrived. Almost instantly they appeared in the draperied balcony, and proceedings commenced. A brief address was read by Dr. Breidenstein, the chairman of the Committee, from the desk I have mentioned; and then, amid the thunder of cannon, a *salvo* from the riflemen, the pealing of bells, and the cheering of the multitude, the veil fell from around the statue. This was one of the moments of which life has not many, meagre of interest and theatrical as it may seem in description.—Many hearts were very full; but amid all the crowding memories and emotions of the scene, some will not forget the expression of Liszt's countenance as he went up to the monument,—the first, as was fitting, after one or two town authorities,—and signed the record of the transaction. I think that an expression so nobly and serenely radiant I have never seen on any face. While the signing went on, a chorus was sung; but, as happens with most open-air choruses, the effect was poor —indeed, the music passed unnoticed in the midst of stronger excitement. And there, at

last, stood Beethoven—the rugged, afflicted, storm-beaten genius,—placed royally in the town of his birth, by the munificent exertions of another musician, in the presence of a company such as there is small probability of any of this generation ever seeing assembled again.

And there, in spite of all the gibing, and soreness, and scornfulness of the time, will he stand, unless a fit of iconoclasm should break forth; unless the Germans, like the French, amuse themselves with pulling down the effigies they themselves have set up!—It was one of the odd inconsistencies of this singular Festival, that at night, when the whole town was garlanded and illuminated, that dark bronze effigy was left to stand, in the shade of the Cathedral, without bough, or leaf, or light,—dusky and grim. Were we to read accidents symbolically, such an end to the day of Beethoven's *apotheosis* might perhaps be felt as not the least significant part of the show. Enough that on the evening in question, the crowd was everywhere else, and the Effigy left in darkness!

In sketching the outward features of this commemoration, before venturing a few remembrances of its purely artistic portion—the music

performed—I must again insist, little to the credit of musicians though it be, that the seamy side of artistic life has rarely been so clearly and so coarsely manifest as at that Bonn Festival.—It appeared as if some of the guests had come thither with no other purpose than to see the matter fail, and to sneer at the universal discomfiture. A. would not sing. B. (which was almost more annoying) *would* play. C. wrote anonymous letters to apprise every one that D. was of character too infamous to be allowed part or share in so sacred a rite. Every one seemed to have set his or her heart on accompanying "Adelaida!" Then what business had Liszt to permit his own *Cantata* to be performed, when E. had his psalm ready, and F. his Hymn of Praise, and G. his choral *symphony* as good as Beethoven's, and twice as difficult? Then H. and F. and I. were spirited away by Meyerbeer, who was accused of fixing the rehearsals for the King of Prussia's concerts at Brühl and Stolzenfels, at the precise time best calculated to thwart the operations of the Bonn Committee.—Then the wranglings for place and precedence at the dinner-tables at "The Star" every day!—and the sneers and the slanders, and the confidences in by-corners, and

the stoppages on the stairs to relate some new hope of an utter break down—some new story of ill-usage and neglect. It was the plague of Envy, called into open and active life by mismanagement, in its fullest perfection!

Meanwhile, there were smaller farces played off in corners by obscure folk, while the great comedy of bitterness went smoothly on among the great artists. The French guests, in particular, awkwardly fell in with the humour of the time, and the spirit of the occasion. They had come thither with "their wives and their concubines," and they were very clamorous; but somehow or other their company and their clamour were felt to be of no vital importance to the solemnity, and their uneasy irritability took the oddest forms conceivable. One Parisian professor — in those days as vehemently loyal to Louis Philippe, as he subsequently became warmly laudatory of the Red Republic—was particularly wrathful in Liszt's room after the banquet, which closed the festivities with a scene of brawl, and noise, and confusion never to be forgotten.—At this the health of the King of Prussia had been drunk, and like honours had been paid to our Queen—

as the two Royal personages who had witnessed the inauguration. By this M. E—— felt his loyalty outraged. His blood was up. Silence would be a shame and a cowardice! "It was an insult," screamed he—"an insult to the great French nation, the omission of the name of the King of the French—an insult of which notice ought to be taken, and of which *he* would take notice!"—for then M. E—— wielded the thunder of a small French newspaper. "Why," continued M. E——, waxing fiercer at the diversion of the one Englishman present,—"why were no honours to be paid to Louis Philippe, if the Queen of England's health was to be made a toast of?"—"Why," replied the Englishman, "were none paid to the Emperor of China, or the Cham of Tartary? They, too, had not been present at the ceremony, and they had as little right to be forgotten as *M. le Roi Citoyen*."

A word in season may be found sharp, sometimes, as well as soothing. My countryman's cool reply raised a laugh from every one, save poor M. E——, whose rage and gesticulation flamed up to hurricane pitch. He tramped up and down the little room like a Malay. He abused the Bonn Committee, he abused Liszt,

he abused the King of Prussia and the Queen of England—he abused everybody, the company in presence not excepted ;—before he had done, I think he had got to abusing Beethoven. The manifestation ended by his rushing out of the room in the midst of a burst of cigar smoke and loud laughter, with violent maledictions, and awful threats of the vengeance that he would take. But it came to pass that none of these were accomplished. — That day the medley and ill-assorted group that had thronged to Bonn to see the inauguration of the statue broke up, and no more was heard of M. E——.

It was a week ere the bustle, and *cancan*, and discord of "the Star" were out of one's ears. Perhaps there might be something of destiny and fitness in the fact, that storm and strife in no common measure attended the honours to him whose life had been a long strife with storm, and pain, and decay, and neglect, and disease ; and whose nature had yielded, more than the noblest natures should yield, to their untoward influences. The artist's security in the future fate of his music was a beautiful and worthy attestation of the "diviner mind" within him ; but the man's moroseness,

and turbulence and suspicion, are not wholly to be forgiven or prayed away, by the most devout faith in his genius. Something of pain will make its way into the midst of all the pleasure and pride which every musician will feel when his name is mentioned. And it is singularly in accordance with a life that produces feelings like these, that the record of one of the most remarkable musical celebrations which the world has ever seen, should be flawed, and specked, and spotted in no common degree by traces of anger, jealousy, and unkindness—and that the recollection of it should have a strange dash of fever, discomfort, and incompleteness, mingling with all its sincerity and solemnity.

CHAPTER IV.

BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC AT BONN.

Some notes on Beethoven's "*Missa Solennis*"—Its performance at Bonn—His pianoforte *Concerto* in E flat—Dr. Liszt's playing of it.

THE great music by Beethoven, performed in Beethoven's honour, at this Beethoven Festival, under the conduct of Drs. Spohr and Liszt, consisted of his *Mass* in C in the Minster, his *Missa Solennis* and *Choral Symphony*, his *Overture* to "Coriolan," his *Symphony* in C minor, his pianoforte *Concerto* in E flat, — "Adelaida," — the song of the Seraph from his "Mount of Olives," and the *Finale* to his "Fidelio."

To descant on the larger portion of these works would happily be now a most superfluous labour, so far as English readers are concerned. Even the *Choral Symphony* is now well known in London, with all its brilliant and all its obscure

points—its splendours and its crudities (the last, few but striking); and such general remarks on the last manner of its composer as I have fancied not unimportant, belong to a subsequent chapter of these journals. Another of his great works selected, however, was, and probably will always remain to be, less familiar; and thus a few hints on its nature and properties may not be wholly impertinent.

It was at Bonn that many—myself among the number—came to know Beethoven's "*Missa Solennis*"—by being for the first time present at a correct performance of that stupendous musical work. Many among the listeners, probably, had attempted, by perusal, trials on a small scale, and other such expedients, to approach it; but the best of these contrivances is insufficient, let imagination be ever so quick, or science ever so ready. If "seeing is believing," how much more in Music is "hearing, knowing!" The mind's ear will go far, but the body's ear goes further. There is more fancy than truth in the poet's assurance, that—

> "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter . . . . ."

I remember, after the first performance of a

great work, asking its composer if he himself was satisfied. "It sounds well," was the answer, tears of emotion being in the speaker's eyes. The reality, for him, had proved better than the imagination. When the converse happens in Music,—when the idea outstretches beyond the bounds of practicable and pleasurable execution, sense of failure is apt painfully to predominate over sympathy with aspiration.

In some measure, such must be the impression produced by the "*Missa Solennis*"—but only so far, I think, as the deafness of Beethoven, and the rugged temper exasperated by his malady, led him to defy every proposition of change or reconsideration, and to treat every remonstrance made by his executants as so much puerile folly.—It is hardly possible to conceive such a vocal execution of this Mass, as implies ease to the singers, and power on their parts to attend to the expression of the music, instead of stiffly contesting for the notes, and taking the passages by force. The chorus that is to execute the *allegro con moto*, "*Et vitam venturi*," which winds up the "Credo," with one of the most harassing *codas* ever dreamed of, should be composed of *soprani* as brilliant as Grisi, of *con-*

tralti as powerful and rich as Alboni, of tenors as vigorous as Duprez and as flexible as Rubini, and of basses as sonorous and as mordant as Lablache. Even then, its perfect execution, as regards time, tone, and accent, would demand unslumbering watchfulness and effort; and we have no assurance that the effect would in any respect correspond with the preciousness of the materials brought together, or repay the almost torturing self-renunciation of the executants.

A point or two in this Mass are open to exception, in respect of the composer's idea. The second *coda* to the "Gloria," which enfeebles the effect of its magnificent close—the too theatrical roll of drum and trumpet, in the "*Dona*," which emphasize the petition for peace by suggesting the neighbourhood of war—may be instanced as among the eccentricities of Beethoven's late compositions, the nature and limits of which it is so well should be studied and defined. But need the clearest admission of these and a few other such specks and disproportions impair our enjoyment of that which is glorious and spiritually sublime in this work? So far from this, the mind that is once contented to leave irreconcileable contradictions un-

reconciled, is far more free to believe, to appreciate, and to take delight, than the one which is perpetually on a tip-toe strain to place false and true, incomplete and complete, within the same halo of sanctity, from mistaken ideas of reverence and humility. Whereas Admiration has only to add to, to perfect, and to vary its knowledge—to wait for clearer light, *not* to receive that which its instincts have at first rejected — Affectation must be ever retracing its steps, searching out by-ways, proclaiming crooked to be straight—and hard, soft—and false, true; until life and heart, and even the power of really loving and of wholly believing, are lost in the process—

"And nought is everything, and everything is nought."

And, supposing that what has been said in objection is admitted to the very fullest extent, —supposing that we do, because we *must*, own the presence of crudity, incompleteness,—of arrogant mistake, even—in the later works of Beethoven —supposing us to have declared that the strange, fierce, introverted life into which Temperament and Trial drove him, has left its traces on his utterances in Art, what then?—Does this make

the glory of what is glorious, the truth of what is true, less glorious or less true? His "*Missa Solennis*," will always stand as a marvel—as a colossal work, planned on a scale by many a cubit grander than its writer's Mass in C—yet still of the same order of architecture.

These two Masses, indeed, are alone among Catholic music.* They bear the marks of no epoch of Art — of no fashion in theology. There is nothing of chord orthodox or chord heterodox in them—very few traces of those *Shibboleths*, the tendency of which is to degrade those using them from sanctity into sanctimoniousness. A touch or two of the ecclesiastical chant may be found† in the "Bene-

* Not less catholic in tone—not less devotional in feeling—not less distinct from any Protestant or secular music by their composer—are Mendelssohn's "Convent Motetts," and his "*Ave Maria*," and his "*Lauda Sion*." There, as everywhere else, he did his best, like a true man and like a true artist who will do nothing that he *cannot* do well. But, in idea and in fancy, there is no possible comparison betwixt the two writers. We may say "Handel and Beethoven:" we cannot say "Beethoven," and any newer composer.

† Found, let it be added, in a purity, and employed with a freedom in intermixture with phrases of younger date (not to say more mundane quality), which is unparagoned.—Observe, especially, in this "Benedictus," the exquisite relief and pathetic sanctity given by the introduction of the unaccompanied voices in antiphony with

dictus" of the Mass in C, but none are to be detected in the "*Missa Solennis*." If the canonical intervals and harmonies exist, the effect is not there. There is not a touch of cope or cowl,—of the passionless eye, pinched-up mouth, or slack sliding step belonging to any religious order of any church-period, in Beethoven when he lays his gift on the altar;—as little is there the slightest mundane suggestion or emotion calculated for one instant to disturb the solemnity of the hour and the sanctity of the place in his Mass music. On the contrary, we may throughout it discern an earnest and intense devotional spirit, for the expression of which all existing means of utterance were too small and limited —a faith, claiming the heavens for its temple, and the elements for its ministers—laying hold of every power which modern science and discovery had revealed—bowing not only soul and body, but brain also, in lowliest adoration. Surely this is something greater and truer, more intensely and spiritually devotional, than the

the chorus, towards its close. In no other place do I know a more charming example of this now frequently-tried effect. Once or twice was it indicated by Handel (who, indeed, indicated everything), but it is here thoroughly put to its best account.

finest arrangement of tones Gregorian or Ambrosian,—than the most skilful piece of writing *alla Capella* or *alla Palestrina*.

The amount of nobility and beauty cast without effort into forms entirely new which is contained in this " *Missa Solennis*," cannot fail to arrest and enchant even the moderately cultivated listener when he first hears it. Setting aside the ample proportions and melodic richness of the ideas of the " Kyrie," the distribution of the *solo* voices at the very outset of the movement, so free without being formless, gives an effect of vastness, space, and limitless resource, such as we feel in those cathedral temples, where amongst arch and aisle, and clustered columns, the sense of confinement and boundary is lost. Observe, again, how this grows, spreads, receives new development and new light, without anything like perplexing intricacy, at the words, " *Christe eleison*," in spite of what may be called the secularity of the triple rhythm, which, so far from being mystified, is brought into the most distinct prominence by the *pizzicato* of the stringed instruments with which the *tempo* is marked.

In the " Gloria," again, the expression of the sudden and sonorous *piano*, on the words " *et in*

terra pax," is as unexpectedly thrilling as though Pergolesi and Handel, and a hundred more writers, had not used in the same place a similar exchange of strong for soft music. The ear may at first be distanced by the many modulations into remote keys, which this " Gloria" contains, ere it is allowed full satisfaction in the " *Quoniam*"—but the intense supplication of the " *Qui tollis*" (made as it were the prayer of countless multitudes, by the manner in which voices and chorus bear one another up, already adverted to), the enormous climax on the words "*cum sanctu spiritu*," made by the hardy use of the pedal bass, followed by the outbreak of ever-quickening jubilation in the *solo* voices, heightened and enhanced till the very last chord of the first *coda* is reached—afford those sensations such as only belong to the Shakspeares and Michael Angelos of Art. Nearer to the Holy of Holies, it is hardly possible for mortal poet to approach.

In the third hymn or " Credo," somewhat more of a clue is required, even before its *coda* "*et vitam*" is reached. The master's inspiration is more broken — his recourse to somewhat arbitrary artifices in reinforcement of picturesque expression is at once more obvious

and more bewildering than in the earlier portions of the Mass. The text, it is true, is more difficult, in all that it comprehends, than that of any other part of the service; but Beethoven had found it tractable and susceptible of the noblest musical treatment in his Mass in C; and in his second attempt, I confess, he suffers, by what seems a strain to outdo himself. The ear is put into a state of unrest, by the very commencement of the movement.—There the full opening chord of E flat (the "Credo" being in B flat)* deludes rather than directs it. From this it is difficult wholly to recover, and so frequent and abrupt are the changes of time, style, and design, that the occasional reiteration of the leading four notes of ejaculation, "*Credo!*" in place of giving unity, may well pass unobserved

* This device, of beginning out of the key, was employed elsewhere by Beethoven—as in his *rondos* to his grand *trio* in B flat, his pianoforte *concerto* in G *major*, his second Razumouffsky *quartett* in E minor and his posthumous stringed *quartett* in B flat. It was, perhaps, first noted as a peculiarity, recurring sufficiently often to amount to a characteristic, by Mr. G. Macfarren in his "Analytical Notices," prepared for the *Quartett Association*.—However permissible as an expedient for giving piquancy to a *finale*, it has to my ear a disturbing effect, as opening a grand composition; for such the "Credo" of a Catholic service must be considered, being performed, as it is, apart, complete, and after some interval of pause.

on a first hearing. Yet, if I venture to think Beethoven inferior to Beethoven's self in this cardinal movement, instinct alone (how much more subsequent examination and comparison) must assure the commonest listener that by no one save Beethoven could it have been written. The phrase on the words "*Qui propter nos homines*," of itself substantiates the master's presence—by its largeness of outline, rich beauty, and deep feeling. There are, again, some of his own in-incomparable touches of expression in the "*Et incarnatus*," especially that awful, shuddering modulation of terrible difficulty on the word "*Passus:*" but his earlier "Credo" is hardly less mighty in idea, and essentially greater, because more complete and simple, in its construction.

The "Benedictus" is the last movement on which I shall offer a remark; since, after the commencement of the "Agnus," the "*Dona*" escapes into regions so nearly bordering on the fantastic, that devotional feeling can with difficulty sustain itself, in this, again, how different Beethoven's earlier mass! But the "Benedictus," in form so florid, in structure so essentially simple,* is another of those movements

* There are few occupations, however amusing, more profit-

that possess themselves of the ear, not so much by the touches of genius which they contain, as by the tone of genius diffused throughout. Led, as the *solo* quartett there is, by a *soprano* voice of the highest pitch, the device by which every effect of painful acuteness is avoided, has always struck me as an example of that masterly daring which amounts to inspiration. This is the introduction into the score of a *violin obbligato*—whose clearer and more poignant sounds, temper by contrast the clear and almost shrill passages which the principal female voice has to execute and to sustain. By this expedient, again, has been gained one of those effects of extension which it seems to have been Beethoven's instinct, if not settled purpose, to keep throughout this Mass—perhaps, however, not without a certain approach to that secularity of which there is neither tinge nor trace in the preceding divisions of the composition.

I have offered a few notes on this remarkable work (I repeat), from believing that it is

less than marking musical coincidences. There are few writers who furnish so little occasion for the exercise as Beethoven. But who can hear the theme of this "Benedictus" without being reminded of that insipid pastoral *romance* in Mehul's "Joseph," which is the delight of all French tenor singers?

less understood than most of its master's compositions, because of the inevitable rarity of its being performed; and that this, more than any extra abstruseness and entanglement which it contains, has led thoughtful persons to regard it as fuller of crudity, enigma and difficulty than the choral movement of Beethoven's Ninth *Symphony*. A mass, again, always loses terribly by being performed as concert-music.—At Bonn the *solos* were toiled through by a quartett of painstaking but ineffective vocalists. Nor was Dr. Spohr altogether the conductor to make the most of his materials, in music so gigantic, so spirited, calling for so much force, accent, and decision. The execution was, nevertheless, fine, —finer possibly than will be ever got in England, owing to the peculiar qualities of German voices, which are generally higher than ours in compass. By this the *altos* lose sonority; and, in truth, are for the most part somewhat woolly and wooden *mezzi soprani*—but the power gained for the trebles and tenors in music forced to and kept on such extreme heights, is a counterbalance, under the circumstances, of the highest possible value.

Ere I leave this Bonn Festival, I must lastly

commemorate as the most magnificent piece of pianoforte playing which I ever heard, Dr. Liszt's delivery of the *Concerto* in E flat. It has been twice my good fortune to hear Mendelssohn delight himself (for it was a delight to him) by playing the master's more wayward, delicate, and fascinating *Concerto* in G—these performances marking two of my brightest musical hours; but the work played at Bonn is the grander one, and the occasion was grander; and whereas its deliverer restrained himself within all the limits that the most sober classicist could have prescribed, he still rose to a loftiness, — in part ascribable to the enthusiasm of time and place, in part referable to a nature chivalresque, proud, and poetical in no common degree,—which I have heard no other instrumentalist attain. The weakness and insufficiency of his instrument was, somehow, forgotten in the glory of his execution. The triumph in the mind of the executant sustained the triumph in the idea of the composition without strain, without spasm ;—but with a breadth, and depth, and height, such as made the genius of the executant approach the genius of the inventor. That such approximations do exist in music, though few and far

between, I have long ceased to doubt. There are players, there are poets;—and as a poet, Listz was possibly never so sublimely or genuinely inspired as in that performance, which remains a bright and precious thing in the midst of all the curiously particoloured recollections of that Beethoven Festival at Bonn.—The giver of the feast (for such Liszt was) made his mark there by his music no less than by his munificence.

CHAPTER V.

BEETHOVEN AS AN INFLUENCE.

Admiration not always implying imitation—Remark on those who have classed Beethoven's writings in periods—His originality already developed in the "*Sinfonia Eroica*"—His tendency to employ the devices which belong to all styles of music; the *Adagio* to his *Choral Symphony*—How far disguise is an object of legitimate attempt—Beethoven's caprices of irregularity—His fragmentary passages, without explicable meaning, referred to and cited—His harmonies—Protest against finality in criticism; M. Oulibicheff—A note on "competent representation"—Further examples—Imitation of Beethoven—Ferdinand Ries—Imitation rendered difficult by the absence of mannerism—When and where the easy imitation of Beethoven's peculiarities began; and why it was attempted—His vocal writings—The good and the bad—The voice not an instrument amenable to despotic coercion—Beethoven thoroughly capable of using as well as of abusing it—The good and the less good parts of "Fidelio"—The worthy successors of Beethoven all original—M. Berlioz—Summing up.

THAT there are deathless poets in Art who take rank by the works which they produce, considered without reference to their consequences—

as well as artists who are immortal in right of the influences they exercise on their age, is a distinction not always sufficiently kept in sight or memory.—To imagine that everything that we admire the most is therefore fit to serve for universal pattern, is as absurd as would be the fancy of any tourist who, having looked at Mont Blanc, resolved to imitate that mountain in his own park among the fens. Many are the mighty works to which we must look up, knowing them to be solitary—too high, too original, too brilliant, to be reproduced on a smaller scale with weakened outlines and a dimmer lustre. Every poet does not furnish us with household words that can be sung over the cradle, or with a phraseology capable of universal adoption. We must rejoice in the spirit of certain masters, —we must analyze, because we may emulate, the form of others.

There is more than ordinary need of distinctions like these for those who are under the spell of the wondrous genius of Beethoven, when we observe the use which has been made of certain of his compositions as models, watchwords, points of departure. Thus, a few desultory remarks on that in his music which can be taken,

and that which should be left,—may not impertinently follow a sketch of those mad days, made up of noisy orgies and dignified solemnities, during which his statue was set up in his birthplace as "a station" for all pilgrims of Art to come.

It has been the fashion with most of those who have written on the music of Beethoven to class his works in periods, with the view of insisting on the development of his peculiar individuality, and of adding to such assertion a corollary, that his successors, to be worth attention, must proceed further in the road that he opened out, during his later years of composition.—If it be meant by this process to claim for him any progressive growth in originality, I apprehend that facts must be strained more violently than facts are ordinarily strained by those who are in love with classification, and desire to set a system. The brilliant and peculiar inspirations of Beethoven, the manner in which at once he broke away from all that Mozart and Haydn had done before him, is shown as clearly in the second *Sonata* of his first book of pianoforte *Sonatas* (Op. 2, dedicated to Haydn), in his *Sonatas alla fantasia* (Op. 27), in his early

Pianoforte Trio in C minor (which, it has been said, that Haydn dissuaded him from publishing), as in his very latest works. The *Sinfonia Eroica*, his third *Symphony*, save in the solitary matter of introducing voices, must have seemed in its young day as entirely original as the *Choral Symphony* did later—the second of his *Razumouffsky Quartetts*, that in E minor, must have been felt as freakish as the last of those compositions, in which the rhapsodists assure us that, for the first time, Beethoven came to the full expression of his peculiar originality.—For to what do the discoveries so called in the master's later works amount? To the annulling of form, as some would fain prove?—nay, merely, I maintain, to a confusing of form, beyond the instant recognition of the educated ear—to an obstinate determination of demanding *habituated* listeners, as well as sound and thoroughly ready musicians, and to a somewhat mistaken resolution to mix up in the style elect — that of instrumental composition—all the devices that belong to every style. As an instance, there are few ears —be they ever so quick, ever so prepared for novelty—that, on a first hearing of the *Adagio* of the *Choral Symphony*, will recognise that

Beethoven chose to write an instrumental song, *with instrumental symphonies*—as a theme for the future elaborate and bewitching variations of which the movement (the two episodes in $\frac{3}{4}$ *tempo* allowed for) mainly consits. Yet such is the fact; and the device fails because it does not suggest itself as a new device to the hearer, —but is taught him only by the eye when he peruses the score. The same clue unties the mysteries of that slow movement, the "*Canzone in the Lydian mode*," in the Posthumous *Quartett* (Op. 132); and both examples are rather to be classed among such recondite experiments as those in which Bach delighted, than with real strokes of bright and new fancy. Both were more or less anticipated in the curious and only partially effective *finale* to the *Sinfonia Eroica*—where, before the theme for variations was frankly announced, the composer puzzled rather than piqued his public by showing the scaffolding—and in the more complete *Adagio* to the grand instrumental *trio* in B flat major, where a pompous theme in the slowest possible movement was dressed in variations, some of which are so curious as well as felicitous, that the ear may be pardoned if, till this fact be

apprehended, it loses recognition of the theme so mystified in the glosses of that theme.

And here a moment's digression may be made to inquire how far the ingenuity of complete disguise is a legitimate object in musical construction. We are used to laugh at the old pedantries of the scholastic contrapuntists of the elder times, who would build a composition on a known chant as a ground bass in so high, and so complicated, and so florid a form of architecture, that the ground aforesaid was totally smothered out of sight. Whether the extreme exigence of the rhapsodists may not, after its kind, be utterly as arrogant, inconsiderate, and at true variance with all the best purposes of art, admit of close question. At all events, that Beethoven loved to drive the experiment to its ultimate consequences, in regard to Variations, will be seen—not only in his tremendous and tedious *suite* of thirty-three Variations on the well-known *waltz* by Diabelli (Op. 120), but also in the last movement of his last pianoforte *Sonata* (the one in C minor, Op. 111), and again in the varied theme of his late *quartett* (Op. 131). There are few examples, like this last, of music of the clearest

structure sounding utterly confused, by reason of the amount of freak, and change, and artifice introduced, not so much to satisfy as to disappoint.

Such, however, are what may be called the caprices of regularity, in which, while proportion, and sequence, and mathematical harmony of parts are virtually conciliated and attended to, every possible attempt is made to shake the average reader's faith, to bewilder his powers of attention, to beguile him into fancying that he is lost when he is close at home. In this there is more conceit than novelty — more of the tyranny of fancy than its power. But there are works of Beethoven that contain innovations more serious than these—that reveal passages thrust in without any intelligible reason—new phrases that are virtually so many unwelcome interlopers in the midst of a regular composition, which entirely "throw out" the ear best trained to follow the freaks and frenzies of the poet, and containing no defence for themselves in their superior beauty. Such, for instance, is the phrase of four *bars*, in the introduction to the *finale* of the *Choral Symphony*,—I allude to the *poco ritenente adagio*:—

the pertinence or charm of which will remain a mystery till Chaos come again.—Such, also, is the *cadenza poco adagio*, for the four *solo* voices in B major, which occurs towards the close of the movement, perversely interrupting the excitement of the *stretto*, and which might have been solely intended to exhibit the *solo* vocalists strained to an awkward task, almost beyond their forces. Similar examples of the known laws, forms of symmetry and of climax wilfully, needlessly, and ineffectively violated, might be adduced from the late *quartetts*, anxiously sown in among the most splendid, the freshest, and the most original thoughts of the master, and, therefore, curiously, by the worshippers, confounded *with* them ; but to enumerate these is unnecessary, since the specimens cited will suffice to make clear the cast of distinction and criticism here attempted, and to illustrate what it is that the apostles of a new revelation have imitated, as regards form or no form, in Beethoven's later compositions.

A like course adopted with his harmonies might show, I apprehend, that the sole peculiarities among them, which the discordant school of modern effect-seekers has tried to adopt and to extend, are precisely those which are virtually not discoveries—which cannot be defended—being whimsicalities thrown in by him, under the impression of giving the last piquancy to his contrasts, after his ear had ceased to be able to give account of, or keep watch over, the limits which separate sonority, suspense, and cacophony. If, however, we were to enter the question of harmonies permissible and intolerable, we might be lost in that most discordant domain of musical controversy, where theorist pelts theorist: this with Rameau—that with Marx—a third with Bach—a fourth with the pure Italian church writers—and be "settled" by that most easily snatched up of all arguments, which reminds us that every new concord or discord has, in its turn, been dragged into an unwilling and pedantic world by main force. In the midst of confusions like these, Common Sense loses her voice, and all idea of Precedent in progress is scouted: so that, to instance what may seem to tolerably

exercised listeners pure or impure—allowable on the score of heightening climax, or to be deprecated as substituting importunate harshness or ugliness, for that sternness which holds back the ear for a moment, only that its coming rapture of relief may be all the ampler and more perfect—would be a loss of time—a quail-note in a storm, by the most pertinacious emission of which the strife of angry tongues would be only exasperated, not stilled.

Let it be earnestly urged, however, that the above attempts to define and select, own no kindred with those of the formalists, who are for ever placing their own barriers of finality to invention, or else who allow some one idolized writer to place the barriers for them. M. Oulibicheff, whose work on Mozart is one of the most earnest contributions to musical literature lately put forth, thus assumes that there is one Median and Persian—or rather, may we not say, Mozartean and Procrustean?—form for the *quartett*, for the *symphony*, and this he holds his idol elect to have reached; and beyond this, all such amplifications and strayings as Beethoven ventured, are only so many steps towards decay. With him the fugue in Mozart's *quartett* in G

major is a canonical fugue, fit for a quartett; while the fugue in Beethoven's *Razumouffsky quartett* in C major, is something too pretentious, flaring, and spun out—a picture with a subject too large for its canvas. But who shall make an inevitable, an irrevocable scale, according to which Genius must express its greater, less, and least thoughts? What is the "Ezekiel" by Raphael at Florence but a cabinet picture? or the tremendous "Medusa" by "Lionardo," in the *Uffizi*, but a mere head? What is Milton's sonnet "On the Massacre of Piedmont" but a cabinet poem? Yet is there any gazer, any reader, who can cavil at the one or the other, as being unfitly rendered? In a work of musical excitement, the proper length is decided by the sustaining power of the musical poet:—while that which can be competently represented by competent executants,* decides the question of propriety of manner. But in proportion as

* Here a cautionary word may be added:—"Competent representation" does not mean a perpetual study to overcome ungracious difficulties. The latter preclude the former. It means such a performance as is only possible when the means are consulted, as well as the end decided upon. In answer to this, I may have Shakspeare's *Caliban* and *Ariel*, also his *Cobweb*, *Pease-blossom*, *Moth*, and *Mustard-seed*, marshalled in array

the mind is free to follow Fancy whereso-ever she can bear it, must Reason be awake to make sure that it is Fancy whom we are following; and must Reverence, with eyes upraised to the great and universal beauty and simplicity of art, stand in place of that personal *pseudo*-reverence (in reality covert vanity, calling itself idol-worship) which *dare* not, because it cannot, and *will* not distinguish—and which vows implicit and unquestioning homage to all that touches its own sympathies, or teaches in its own

against me. And what shall be said in return? That these plays (as plays) are good, in spite—not because—of their delicious appeals to the poetical faith and imagination of those under their spell. Further, that Music, because vague in language (and thus more limited in resource), is bound within stricter laws than Poetry, if she would not lose herself within a chaos. There is no fear of any student of Shakspeare, owing to ineffective personation on the stage, mistaking what the master meant when he strove to conjure up these Spirits of moonshine, and dew, and the scent of flowers. There is his language to make his conception clear, even if it surpass human power to personate it. Not so when the musician crosses the boundaries of executive possibility. Let our imagination of "unheard melodies" be ever so quick and susceptible, he then always, more or less, is like one writing in unknown tongue—grasping at effects which no powers of comparison that experience can give, enable us to represent. This distinction is perpetually lost sight of—most of all by the poetical critic on Music who is not a musician, and who sighs and strains after his own dreams—not the artist's.

school; or to all that has been done by him who has made war in accordance with its own prejudices. It is not the length of our master's appeals—it is not the mighty, and deep, and lofty mould in which he chooses to cast his thoughts, using what means of utterance he will—that will excite question or remonstrance in a well-balanced mind. The *Adagio* (to instance) in his marvellous *solo Sonata* in B flat (Op. 106), will rivet, though it may fatigue, the new listener; for the newest competent listener will there follow the thought, and trace the path of the construction, and not be bewildered because (to venture a fantastic *simile*) he is led into a *Coliseum* of vastness and grandeur.

But no listener, old or new, will ever listen to the final fugue, which closes that very same *Sonata* without being more fatigued than riveted —without feeling that there is much to be reconciled with—that there are knots which cannot be untied without wear and tear of the thread—effects to which the ear may become inured, but which it can never enjoy—moments of close and adventurous combination, where neither the intricacy nor the adventure are so remarkable as the morbid activity which generated them. And

while the *adagio* will reveal itself to be a somewhat mysterious and Titanic masterpiece—so assuredly will the fugue in question be discerned to be a magnificent but chaotic mistake—of genius.

Now, let us glance for a moment at the imitators of Beethoven, and see if we can make out what they have selected for imitation. The first of these—nay, for some twenty years, the only one to be found—among European composers, at all deserving the name, was Ferdinand Ries; and he attached himself, by love, by intercourse, and by habit, to those works by his master, in which the master's peculiar genius was complete—not clouded, flawed, or crossed with singularities never to be unriddled. By the mass of compositions by Ries before the public (which, indeed, for any present acceptance that they find, might never have been written at all), he is proved to have been a thoroughly trained musician—commanding fluency of expression in no common measure—not without a humour of his own—not without a certain vein of wild and national melody — not without a fire and a brightness that remove most of his carefully-finished works beyond the category of tedious

and imitative exercise-music. He wrote well for the orchestra; and being, in his day, a superb piano-forte player, he wrote effectively for his own instrument. But, seduced by the bold, uncompromising manner of his original, he fancied that abrupt transitions, unforeseen interruptions, harsh modulations—if applied to thoughts in themselves weak and second-hand, or in no wise fit for such treatment—would bring him to a grandeur and an authority approaching those of his model elect. They did but succeed, alas! in earning for him an unfair reputation for oddity and rudeness, without the relief of any better or more agreeable individualities. He has, in the general musical world, a fame little better than that of the adroit country actor, who succeeded in catching some of the salient points of Kemble's stately declamation, or Kean's violent and spasmodic transitions. Yet, as life advanced, and he emancipated himself from that excessive admiration which takes the form of outward simulation, and only arrives at the success of clever grimace, Ries produced many works that deserve a better fate than to be forgotten—in which, though an early unsettlement of mind can, perhaps, be traced, there may be also found a spirit, interest, indi-

viduality, such as few writers, if they now command such qualities, now exhibit.

By the example of Ries, then—a solitary example, morever, among German composers, (whereas Mozart has had his thousands, and, later still, Mendelssohn his tens of thousands of close imitators), it may be seen how the great qualities of Beethoven defy dilution, copy, or reproduction; because they are qualities far more dependent on lightning-keen originality of idea, than on this system of orchestration or the other choice of harmony,—than on this manner of introducing a subject or the other mode of working up a close. How, indeed, is second-rate fancy to deal with genius that never did—that could not—repeat itself? There is no making over again, on any pretext, such an effect as that of the suspense, followed by the glorious burst of triumph, which is now so familiar to us, in the *scherzo* and martial *finale* of the C minor *Symphony*. There is no parroting such a *programme* (not prelude)* to an opera as the

* By those who are fond of analysis, the above distinction offers a theme fruitful in speculation and comparison. There is a defence for an *overture* being in some sort a table of contents—picture in little of the work that is to come—by those who reject

overture to "Leonora," in which the grasp of the master proves itself gigantic and forcible enough to work up all manner of fragments, so as to make a whole singular in its coherence, the material considered. Were the form of the *Sonata alla fantasia* in C sharp minor adopted by any adventurous new writer, his copy would be simply intolerable—as grossly and nakedly calling attention to the great original, which he was struggling to reproduce. The real inventions of Beethoven are all single, of no school —having no connection one with the other, save by their surpassing loftiness, and the amazing affluence of invention they display. We may see, indeed, here and there, that he used certain instruments in his scores with a richer license than his predecessors,—that he availed himself, when he pleased, of episode, to a degree surprising in one who could spin such wonderful

what is unexpected in Art. To myself the curtain-tune which prepares the ear for the tone of the story, without promising any of its great incidents or moments of fascination, is more welcome. And on this side of the debate Beethoven may be counted as an example—since, the overture to "Fidelio" selected by him, and which now belongs to the opera, does not contain a single *motivo* afterwards used—it is merely an animated and expressive prelude, fit to open a tale of "love more strong than death."

poems out of such simple groups of notes as the one opening the C minor *Symphony*. We can recognize among his piano *Sonatas* one as an example of agitation (the one in D minor, No. 2, Op. 31); another (the one in D major, No. 3, Op. 10), as containing a wonderful contrast betwixt the sublime sadness of its *Largo e mesto*, and the unbridled freakishness of its final *Allegro*. But this is all: for the slightest attempt to make any of these over again, conscious or unconscious, would betray itself, and subject the maker of it to such immediate indignities as awaited the bird in peacock's plumes of the fable.

Some instinct of a truth like this has served the sagacious musicians of all countries, as regards the account to which the really great works of Beethoven might be turned. They have been resorted to as quickeners of the fancy, not as models of academical study. He would be a poor and meagre-minded architect who could gather no strength, nor food for future daring, under the shadow of the Pyramids; but these would assuredly not take the form of a little pyramid. We have had compositions written in the style of Handel (Mo-

zart's capital pianoforte *Sonata* as an example)— a library of *masses*, *overtures*, *quartetts*, *operas*, in the style of Mozart. We have seen more lately, no less clever a man than Herr Marschner take fire at the wizard torch of Weber, and (to continue the simile for a moment) burn blue, and green, and red, as the magician had done before him; — but nothing in the style of Beethoven was largely attempted, till that time arrived with regard to his fame, which will arrive for all greatness,—at which healthy admiration no longer suffices, but morbid admiration begins: when the eccentricities of genius must be proved its highest excellencies, its blemishes its chiefest beauties, and its wayward wanderings its most direct flights. Then, imitation came easily enough. Of all stage-tricks, a mist is the easiest to manufacture; and the painter was more universally humorous than he knew himself to be, who, showing his patron a huge expanse of gray wall, invited that astounded personage to accept it as the passage of *Pharaoh* and his host through the Red Sea, the waves of which had closed over them!

Something like the above may possibly be

the real case of Beethoven and his influences—of Beethoven and his imitators—in regard to his instrumental works. Passing to his vocal writings, definition is possibly an easier matter, and one liable to less argument.

These vocal writings may be clearly separated—the good from the bad. No one, I suppose, will theoretically declare that a mode of composition which deprives the executant of half his powers is either wise, skilful, or artistic. An orchestral composer, who preferred perpetually to use the imperfect notes of the trumpets—who tormented the *viola* by compelling it to do the violin's work, or *vice versâ*—who chose that the flute should represent the *chalumeau* of the clarinet—would be called "bad" by his orchestral subjects, as, also, would be one who, by placing his instruments awkwardly, deprived them of half their sonority. Why, then, should the voice, as an instrument, be misused?

But the voice is *not* an instrument—in oratorio, opera, or song—not one among many equal powers, blending and co-operating for some general object—it is the soul which sets the body in motion, and to which all the members of that body are subservient. To it is

confided the story, with its sentiment and emotion; and all the excessive garniture and drapery, in which its free-will becomes swathed to the stifling point, and by which it runs a risk of losing its hold as presiding spirit of the scene,—however seductive, however gorgeous and intricate in themselves—are but a mistake, leading towards decay in Art, by the displacement and damage of certain among its materials. And more, it is with Art we have to do, not Nature; of which truism the symphonic school of composers have need to be loudly reminded, when, in the pride and power of their preference for that vast convention, the orchestra, they demand that the singer shall not *sing*, but say, sigh, sob, or scream, so as to make his or her parts come as close to rude speech as it is possible. One might be ashamed to recite such self-evident truths as the above, had not a school of musicians arisen, who resolutely pick and choose from among the materials of art only such as suit their own imperfect sympathies or imperfect knowledge; and were not Beethoven perpetually appealed to as one who could do no wrong, and who threw aside all the antiquated canons as so many worn-out supersti-

tions and popular fallacies, thereby emancipating his successors from his own time forth for evermore.

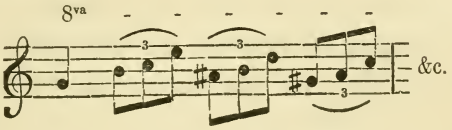
But, as has been asserted in the matter of symmetrical melody, there is no such wholesale and systematic abandonment of vocal seduction in the works of Beethoven, as ought to exist, were he, indeed, to be of authority as an example. He was tyrannical to the voice by fits, rather than by consistent practice,—increasingly so, as age drew the torments of deafness, and mistrust, and contradiction mistaken for the maintenance of free-will, more closely round him. His "Adelaida,"—his *soprano scena* "*Ah! perfido!*" (with the exception of a few bars in its *coda*), his entire *Mass* in C *major*, also, are vocal to a wish. The leading melodies, too, of his choral *Fantasia*, and of the *finale* to his *Choral Symphony* (the last selected, sweetened, and purified by him with great solicitude), are in the most perfect conceivable vocal style; although, being pitched in registers inconveniently acute, they threaten, not tempt, the singers. In continuation, the "Prisoners' Chorus" ("Fidelio"), the "Dervise Chorus" ("Ruins of Athens"), the "Bridesmaids' Chorus" ("King

Stephen"), may be cited in proof that Beethoven knew, as well as any man ever did, how to set forth his voices, in passages of vocal interest, character, and charm, let his orchestra be ever so brilliant. Strip even the chant of the Turkish fanatics above referred to of its descriptive triplet accompaniments,—the incessant tune has still a wild, ferocious character, totally distinguishing it from a bundle of unconnected ejaculations bound together by the orchestra. But there are parts of "Fidelio" to which such praise cannot be applied—of which the vocal portion would lose all interest and significance were instrumental support withdrawn; or where it is remorselessly employed as merely so much *remplissage* thrown in to heighten the effect of the situation. Let any one who is curious compare the opening duet of that opera, betwixt *Jacquino* and *Marcellina*, with the opening duet of Mozart's "Figaro," betwixt *Figaro* and *Susanna* —the great *aria* of *Pizarro*, with the explosion of *The Count* in Mozart's opera (which in tone is very nearly as serious)—or Beethoven's pistol quartett in the vault with Mozart's cemetery duet in "Don Juan," and the distance betwixt vocal insufficiency and vocal sufficiency of in-

terest will be made clear. Further to pursue specification—it might be said that the *Adagio* of *Leonora's* grand *scena* owes no small part of its richness and beauty to the luxurious accompaniment of horns, with which it is decked out (of such difficulty, that the singer must follow, rather than be followed by her instrumental playfellows)—that, from the point at which the "Prisoners' Chorus" ceases, the first *finale* becomes insipid—not solely from the want of motion on the stage, but from the want of beauty and feature in its vocal phrases.* Tried on the same principles, the opening to the last *finale* of "Fidelio" must be owned as trivial and wanting in dignity†—its central movement in B flat, $\frac{3}{4}$ *sostenuto assai*, to flag for lack of interest; and the ear can be said only to be really braced up to the exhilaration and excitement

* Let any one curious to pursue the analysis compare this close of an act with the music in similar situations of Rossini's "Guillaume Tell."

† The same criticism applies more emphatically to the final choruses to "The Ruins of Athens," and to "King Stephen," than which, as regards idea, it would be difficult to find anything more common-place in the most common-place work by Italian composers. The contemptuous haste with which these seem to have been flung off is indicated in no part of Beethoven's slightest instrumental compositions.

which it was the composer's intention to express, when that most joyous of all joyous phrases for the violins—

introduces and carries on a strain of brilliant ecstacy so irresistible as, for an instant, to make us forget in what the character of the movement lies.

Betwixt the outrageous difficulty of some parts of Beethoven's vocal writing, and his utter indifference to charm and interest in others, it is not surprising if worshippers of the wholesale school, refusing to admit blemish, inconsistency, or arrogance in their Divinity, should fail when they adopt as principles his faults, even though, by the adoption, they at once follow the fashion of the hour, which is to rely on orchestral accumulation, and spare themselves the contemned labour (which is not small) of refining their vocal melodies and of studying vocal capacity and vocal expression,—not word by word—not spasm by spasm—not cry by cry—but in its more temperate, more general, more artistic

relation to the text. Viewed as a work and as a whole, however noble "Fidelio" must be rated—viewed as a model, it is *bad;* and that portion of it which is easy to be imitated because defective and incomplete, is little worthy of its master's fame. So that, here again, we perceive that such influence as that opera has exercised on the student, has tended to injure, not to elevate his art, by leading him into confusions—by seducing him into forgetting gratuitous error, for the sake of the splendid shows and complications to which Truth-in-Beauty has been sacrificed,—by encouraging him to act on that fatal canon, that Genius recognizes no differences or qualities of material, but breaks them all into a subservient expression of its great thoughts,—in place of setting out its bright imaginings with double lustre, by turning every quality, peculiarity, natural gift, and acquired polish, to their highest account.

The real inventors since Beethoven—in *opera*, Weber and Meyerbeer; in *symphony* and *quartett*, Mendelssohn; in pianoforte music, Moscheles and Chopin—have not borrowed their style from him.—Weber studied popular melody, and tried "to flatter the ear." Let him be by fits

ever so cruel to the voices, he wrote no opera in which vocal display and vocal charm were not obviously aimed at by him to the full extent of his knowledge.—Meyerbeer is solicitously, curiously rhythmical — doing his best, even, to introduce regular form into the accompaniments of his recitatives, and though sometimes in his works as patchy as *Harlequin's* coat, as lustrous and clear in his patchiness as that gay garment. The strongest hold of Moscheles on fame is in his *Studies* and *Allegri di bravura*, for which no pattern or precedent is to be found in the Viennese master's writings—as little for his four-handed pianoforte *Sonatas;* while his *Concertos*, with all their solid science, are pieces of display for the *solo*-player, with orchestral support, which Beethoven's cannot be said to be. Chopin, too, rests on his *Studies*, *Notturni* and *Mazurkas*,—on purity and peculiarity of form, in short,—his occasional crudity of harmony having a colour and quality of its own, or, if it resemble any model, suggesting very vaguely what a wayward and fantastic student might come to, if, after pampering his waywardness, he got entangled in Spohr's preference for intimation by *appoggiatura* and progression

by half tones.—Of Mendelssohn, who created entirely original works in the style where Beethoven was strongest — *symphonies*, chamber-music, &c.—a word will be said later.

It is perfectly true, that the admirers of M. Berlioz may cite him as a close student of Beethoven's singularities, and as the composer who has done the utmost to carry them out to their ultimate consequences. But with this acute critic and charming writer, as a musician, there is no call to deal in a work on Germany before the Revolutions. When the history of German influences on France comes to be examined, it will be time enough to treat a matter so interesting, so delicate, and in every point of view so intricate.

If, however, the technical influences of Beethoven on musical composition have been few, and those few calculated to bewilder, not to lead aright, the student, the glory and power of the poetical impressions he has produced are such as no language can caricature. When the mind is set free from the fancied necessity of universal defence and blind imitation—when the inquiry, "*What can I do like this, or better than this?*" no longer palsies the hand or intoxicates the

brain—when admiration is permitted to indulge itself; on the one hand, clear of personality, on the other, willing to class, to separate, and to understand—the works of this Giant in instrumental music reveal themselves, and remain as a treasure, uncounted in its richness, unapproached in its sublimity, unparagoned in its brilliancy. There is hardly a mood of the mind or a dream of the fancy, which will not find response or fulfilment in his orchestral or chamber music. It seems impossible to conceive a state of satiety, in which his works should be reputed as too well known. Like Shakspeare's plays—like Handel's choral inventions—like the vast and versatile genius of Michael Angelo—they are exhaustless in suggestion; and year by year will they draw in a larger circle of worshippers, and more and more will their real truth and greatness be appreciated, long after the affected homages of incomplete thinkers shall have died of the weakness of their indiscriminate extravagance. The more reverently and sincerely Beethoven's beauties are understood, the more clearly will it be perceived how far they transcend imitation, and why they distance reproduction.

CHAPTER VI.

MUSIC AT LIEGE AND COLOGNE—1846.

Mendelssohn's "Lauda Sion" at Liege—Peculiarities of the Belgian Church Festival—Picturesque sermon in St. Martin's Church—Unsatisfactory performance—The redeeming point at its close—The *Männer Gesang-Fest* at Cologne—A word in favour of the town — The concourse thither — The Gürzenich-hall—The musical arrangements—A note of the performance—A few general remarks on German *liedertafel* music—Cologne hospitalities—The Cathedral—Beethoven's "Mass in C"—A few notes on it—The works in completion of the Cathedral—Projects and "empty air"—The serenade to Mendelssohn—Close of the meeting.

THE early summer of 1846 was a great year for the Rhine Land and its adjacent district; since then the Lower Rhenish Festival at Aix la Chapelle was conducted by Mendelssohn, and starred by Mddle. Jenny Lind; and within a fortnight afterwards was celebrated at Liege the "Fête Dieu," for which Mendelssohn's "Lauda Sion" was written.

The latter, as distinguished by the performance of a new and important composition, could entice H—— and myself out of London, though the date was the middle of June; and though, owing to the carelessness and apathy of continental announcement on like occasions, our sudden journey had to be risked without any clear idea whether or not we might arrive in time for the first performance of the new work. All, however, went well. A more lovely midnight never shone on Italy than the one which lighted us down the brimming Thames, among a fleet of vessels, rapidly gliding down to the sea in the broad moonshine. Ostend looked less shabby, less extortionate, less rudely comfortless than usual, in the early afternoon; and Louvain, with its fantastically rich Town Hall overhanging our quiet, comfortable inn, made a capital sleeping-place. On reaching St. Martin's, at Liege, the next morning, in time for the commencement of the show, all sense of flurry and fever was at once dissipated by our hearing that the new hymn was reserved for the vesper celebrations of the day.

There was much in that Belgian Church Festival to notice and to recollect—in the curi-

ous mixture of antique sentiment and belief, with modern materials, which it included. There was something to smile at, in the criticisms bestowed on it by visitors from Antwerp, who had held some Church Festival of their own not long before, and who, in the energy and irony of comparison, voted the show at Liege to be poor, and shabby, and peasant-like, and provincial, and theatrical.—The two English strangers will never forget the kindly and cordial hospitality with which they were received, and the glimpse afforded them of one of those happy home-worlds, where prosperity and domestic concord and elegant cultivation combined, seem hardly to leave a hole through which evil can creep in, or envy creep out. But the whole ceremony was too individually Low-Country in its strength and its weakness—in its parade and its humble familiarity—in its success and its failure—to be noticed in a book dealing with German art and manners, save in regard to the German work and the German master that had lured us thither.

There is no need here to write about the "Lauda Sion"—that loveliest of modern Catholic hymns—nor to point out how felicitously, in

setting the Latin monkish verse, Mendelssohn was able to clothe himself in the peculiar garment of a ritual different to his own; and, by the strong sympathies of art, dramatically (as it were) to fall into the tone of a form of worship, at once more solemn, sensual, and scenic than the forms of Lutheranism. But the performance of the "Lauda Sion" gave us occasion to see the composer in a position at once original and trying—as audience at the first performance of a new and important work by himself—and in a case where the performance, moreover, was such as would have thrown a more nervous and less healthily minded man into paroxysms of irritability or of despair.

It was a pity that those who had commissioned such a composer to write such a work, had so entirely miscalculated their means of presenting it, even respectably. The picturesque old church of St. Martin is one of those buildings which swallow up all sound, owing to the curve of the vaults and the bulk of the piers: the orchestra was little more powerful, when heard from below, than the distant scraping of a Christmas serenade far down the street; the chorus was toneless, and out of tune; and

only one *solo* singer, the *soprano*, was even tolerable. On arriving at Liege, with the purpose of conducting his work, Mendelssohn gave up the matter in despair. "No; it is not good; it cannot go well; it will make a bad noise," was his greeting to us. "I am sorry you must hear it. But now that you are so far, will you not come on to Cologne, and hear the two thousand singers?" These were to assemble at the *Männergesang Fest*, which was to be held a day or two later in the Rhine town.—And then he spoke rapturously of the good music they had been just making at Aix la Chapelle —and laughingly of the manner in which all these wanderings to and fro had drawn him off from finishing his "Elijah," which was not yet complete, though the promised time for its completion was drawing nigh—and the "Lauda Sion" and its vexations, and his fruitless journey down to Liege, seemed forgotten.

We drove with him that afternoon up to St. Martin's Church, to hear, as he merrily styled it, "the execution of his music." The sight of the steep, narrow, winding street, decked out with fir-trees, and banners, and the escutcheons of the different towns of Belgium, pleased him;

for he was as keen a lover of a show as a child, and had a true artist's quick sense of the picturesque.—Within the church, a very imposing spectacle was set before us. Previous to the execution of the "Lauda Sion," a sermon suited to the mystic festival was to be preached; and close to the seats occupied by us beneath the pulpit, sate in proud and gorgeous assemblage a collection of Belgian ecclesiastics, archbishops, bishops, and others, magnificently vested in scarlet, and purple, and gold, and damask—a group never to be forgotten, as displayed in the broad, clear sunlight of that warm June afternoon. Some of the old heads were full of power—some venerable in their devout meekness of expression: two I recollect particularly, from their gloomy, yet acute and sinister, intelligence of lip and eye—and the haughty disdain with which their owners endured a discourse apparently little to their taste, and to our judgment alike weak, vehement, and tawdry. In some such gathering must Herr Lessing have studied the fine heads of the churchmen in his great historical picture of John Huss before the Council of Constance. At the close of the sermon, these dignitaries retreated

in stately file to the altar, leaving the attention free to listen to the new Hymn, the performance of which at once began.

Not Envy's self could have helped being in pain for its composer—so slack, and tuneless, and ineffective was the execution of this clear and beautiful work—by a scrannel orchestra, and singers who could hardly be heard, and who evidenced their nationality by resolutely holding back every movement. But in the last verse, *alla breve*—

"Ecce panis angelorum"—

there came a surprise of a different quality. It was scenically accompanied by an unforeseen exposition of the Host, in a gorgeous gilt tabernacle, that slowly turned above the altar, so as to reveal the consecrated elements to the congregation. Incense was swung from censers; and the evening sun, breaking in with a sudden brightness, gave a faëry-like effect to the curling fumes as they rose; while a very musical bell, that timed the movement twice in a bar, added its charm to the rite. I felt a quick grasp on my wrist, as Mendelssohn whispered to me, eagerly, "Listen! how pretty that is! it makes me amends for all their bad playing

and singing,—and I shall hear the rest better some other time." That other time, I believe, never came for the composer of the "Lauda Sion"—since this was only the year before his death!

After such a failure in the musical pleasure which had lured us out so far, little temptation was needed to induce us to try what compensation might be found in the meeting of the Singing Societies of Germany and Belgium at Cologne: where also some new music, written by Mendelssohn for the occasion, was to be performed.

It was in those days too much the fashion to vituperate the city of the Three Kings, as a rough, noisy, dirty place, in which no one would willingly pause who could help it—every traveller being able to quote the obloquy cast upon its "savours" by Coleridge, as an excuse for hurrying along so soon as his hasty visit had been paid to the Cathedral, and the due quantity of disinfecting "waters" had been purchased! Yet any one who has an eye for modern physiognomy and character, or who cares to trace out and to study antique art, will find Cologne

—in spite of its crowded hotels, its ceaseless noises, its abominable streets, and its incessant "charge" of travelling English—well worth knowing thoroughly, and selecting as a halting-place.

This time it served as a rallying point for everything in Belgium, the Rhine Land, and Baden, that could bear a part in a part-song. Railroad and river, the beauty of the season and the joyousness of the Festival, had tempted forth hundreds more than had been in the least expected or provided for—stout, resolved men, who would go up into the orchestra with their friends and sing! In default of sleeping accommodation, the landlords of the hotels were compelled to lay down such of their guests as did not prefer sitting up carousing—head to feet—in all the rooms of their houses. The narrow and scorching garret-accommodation, which had been purveyed for us, had to be strictly claimed and sharply watched; and when reached and occupied, it proved only a nominal seclusion from noise and bustle—the tramping of feet—the smoke of pipes—the banging of doors—and the tempest of ringing bells—which, at all times epidemic in the hotels of Cologne, on that occasion grew to a frenzy

totally unspeakable. I suppose that some sleep must have been got by us somehow; but I have not the remotest idea when, where, or how, it was managed.

The performances were held in the Gürzenich Hall—that ancient, low building which commands its street almost like a castle—and the burgher-warlike air of which is enhanced by the turrets at its corners. Odd enough, in all conscience, was the locality, as one laid out for musical performances—the room having almost every fault which persons experienced in acoustics would denounce as fatal—being too low, too ill-proportioned, and divided down its centre by a row of squat pillars. Then, of course, the orchestra offered very insufficient accommodation for the myriad of *extra* guests who had come, and would sing! But difficulties are no difficulties on certain fortunate occasions. "It was written" that this greatest of musical gatherings should also be one of the gayest. The gloomy old room had been gaily decked out for the Carnival balls of 1846, which had been held there, with that cheap but effective decoration in which the Germans so far exceed the English, and even the French. It was now

hung profusely with garlands, and looked quaint and ancient, but neither grim nor darksome. The kindly eager faces of every one concerned in the arrangement of the Festival, would of themselves have sufficed to light it up.

The arrangements in the orchestra were no less peculiar. The organ was far back in a corner, and raised above and behind the mass of singers were the ninety instruments—these including four flutes, as many oboes and bassoons, eight clarinets, two *corni di bassetto*, eight horns, eight trumpets, four keyed trumpets, six trombones, one bass *tuba*, one *ophicleide*, two pairs of drums, twenty-two *violoncellos*, and fourteen double basses. To keep all these forces in order, it was of course necessary to have a sub-conductor; further, that the music executed should not be very difficult; since the guests—especially, it was said, the uninvited ones—squeezed, and pressed, and penned together in such a narrow space—were by no means to be subjected to the usual searching care and finish of a German rehearsal. If the "full pieces" of music, in which all were employed, went on without failure, we were to be content!

All these things considered, however, the per-

formance was excellent. "The ear," I find from a note made at the time, "was not aware of the vast number of voices in the *fortes;* but in the *mezzo piano* passages, the effect was wonderfully impressive—and to those in the street without, the old Gürzenich Hall seemed crammed even to bursting with sound—but not noise." Then, the best that could be done had been done to give the *programme* of the two concerts the utmost interest. "At the first" (again to refer to my *memorandum*) "was performed 'A Prayer for the Fatherland,' written expressly for the occasion by Herr Weber, the cathedral organist; two *motetts* by Klein and one by Schneider; a rather flashy and picturesque setting of Goethe's 'Meerestille,' by Herr Fischer of Würzburg (which was *encored* violently); a short *lied* by Rochlitz; a hymn by Neithardt; a new setting of Schiller's 'An die Künstler,' written for the occasion by Dr. Mendelssohn (also *encored*); lastly, the 'Hymn to Bacchus,' from the same composer's 'Antigone'—no bad prelude to the drinking bouts which were to come when the concert was over."

The second day's meeting was the more in-

teresting of the two, because less after the style and pattern of an average and orderly concert. The separate singing societies, Flemish and German, were to be put on their mettle, and to contend for the prize, after the fashion of an ancient idyl. There was a wholesome, personal emulation and excitement in this, totally in harmony, nevertheless, with the pervading tone of concord which harmonized so vast an assemblage of scattered materials. "United Germany" (and even in 1846 "United Germany!" had become potent as a watchword, in the spell of which many generous persons conceived many magnificent visions) must for awhile be allowed to split itself up into Westphalia, Swabia, Franconia, Rhenish Prussia—and these into their several towns—and most vivacious was the desire among the parties and partisans belonging to each separate place, that "their own folk" should come well out of the singing contest. I suppose that a pugnacious and "sporting" character has not been, without some show of probability, ascribed to the Englishman. I know that it was impossible to avoid feeling hot, eager, interested (and no doubt), partial, as the exhibition went on.

This was pleasantly and poetically managed. Of course, a *liedertafel* Society would be nothing without its banner, embroidered by loving ladies; and as the parties came down separately to exhibit — the ensign of each society was brought down from the wall, and placed with a flourish of trumpets before the Conductor's desk —each squadron, it may be added, going through its exercises under the guidance of its own general.—First sang the men of Cologne, as the hosts of the festival. How they now sing, we Londoners know; but already, in 1846, they showed capital training and great power.—Next —as also, in courtesy, was due—sang the Flemish guests: a ditty far too stale and poor to have been exhibited at such a contest by the countrymen of Waelrent, and Orlando Lasso, and many another brave ancient composer of part-music. To these followed the singers of Düsseldorf; next (I find by my *memoranda*), the society from Treves, who were accused of a Frenchified taste in the selection of their *lied;* afterwards, the Elberfelders, followed by the party from Mayence, the city of the master-singers, who, as in duty and old remembrance bound, "bore away the bell," and whose part-

singing was unquestionably the most musical and highly-finished exhibition of the meeting. Next to theirs, we liked the song by the Carlsruhe Choir the best; but the audience preferred the lack-a-daisical Spanish canzonet by Reichardt, chosen by the Münster Society. After this had been encored, the Crefeld party did its best—and the whole was brought to a close with the well-known—

"Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland,"

sung with spirit enough to wake the dead, and with a geniality which every European land might have echoed without a passing heart-ache of envy. It is easy now to recollect that, before 1846, there had been head-shakings and misgivings—mutterings on the part of the Princes that these *liedertafel* societies involved a meaning more deeply and directly political than they ought to do—and mysterious whispers among the people and professors of Germany, that the time was not far off at which something nobler was to be done for "Fatherland" than singing about it—joined with the assurances, which already seem as ruefully and shabbily unreal as the cast off tinsel of a theatre, when the battle-

pageant has run its few nights—that patience, union, self-sacrifice would not be wanting on that day when the song should become a speech in man's mouth, if not a sword in man's hand. All these rumours of mistrust on the one side, and manly purpose on the other, I say, had inevitably surged past every traveller through any part of Germany, who travelled with his ears open, long before this Cologne meeting. But there, the passing stranger, at least, was glad to forget them, and, giving himself up to the hilarity of the time, and the purpose of the Festival (which was convened in aid of the works at the cathedral), could join in the chorus, which, as it were, made the bright clear air of the Rhine Land ring again, without adverting to "the cloud like a man's hand"—if, indeed, such portent of coming storm and tumult was already to be marked on the horizon!

On looking back, it seems to me that this meeting, however magnificent and animated it was, showed me, once for all, the limits of the German part-song—possibly the limits of interest which can possibly be reached by any unaccompanied chorus of merely male voices. Viewed as a musical celebration alone, the

meeting would have been found fatiguing, and deficient in variety. A part of the fatigue may have been ascribable to other causes than the monotony arising from so many short pieces, in one and the same style, being performed in succession. The serious vocal music of the German church composers will be found curiously unsatisfactory, if it be compared with parallel Italian specimens, or even the best and most solid pieces which the choir books of our own cathedrals could furnish. It may be national prejudice; but it has seemed to me, generally, harsh, mechanical, slight as regards deep or devotional expression—leaving the head dissentient and the heart cold. Then, to come to such works as more specially fall within the province of the *liedertafel* societies to execute, another remark is to be made. There is something in the tone of German tenor voices (their basses have been famous even so far back as the time of Handel) which, after a time, becomes absolutely distressing to all but German ears: a certain throaty violence, with which notes at the top of and above the average male register, are taken by force, in chest-voice, that grates doubly on an English ear, because

our English faults lie in the opposite extreme. Our artists generally fail to urge themselves sufficiently—a *suave* tone and a pleasing manner having too long been allowed to stand them in the stead of expression, accent, articulation. With the German vocalists it is all—and always—a case of urgency. It is not with them as with us, that their amateurs are apt to be more rash and violent than their professional artists; in part, perhaps, because the former have the enjoyment of pleasure, whereas the latter have merely the employment which is paid for. But it generally happens that a fierce *forte* is compensated for by a dry and toneless *piano*—every charm of light and demi-tint being destroyed as completely as every contrast is rendered. This individuality has naturally enough influenced the secular compositions most in vogue among the *liedertafel* societies. Viewed as a body, the curious union of flimsiness and effort which they present is significant. Unable, by any solid writing in four parts, to get sufficient variety, spirit, and character out of the quartett of four male voices—many devices have been tried by *instrumentalizing* the inner parts which support the melody, to give to the human tones the brilliancy and inex-

pressiveness of wind instruments.—Hence *Polonoises*, with the same sort of *staccato* bass as Bellini used so effectively in his *Polacca* in "I Puritani;" hence an air for some *solo* singer, with its support of voices murmuring through closed lips—effective when employed with a show of probability, as by Auber in his "*Chanson de la Brise*" in "Haydée" (for there the chorus is set forth as mimicking the west wind), but silly when entrusted to the companions of a lover who are to chorus his *serenade*.—The better developed *Cantata* by Mendelssohn, written for Cologne,—"The Sons of Art," from Schiller's poem,—was more integral, solid, and sterling as a piece of music; but in this the composer, calculating for a huge room and a heavy mass of voices, called in the aid of all that the coarse and poignant orchestra could do by way of accompaniment, and wrote not a song so much as a chorus, in which the massive chords and plainly grave progressions would have lost effect had they not been supported, and had they not been sung by a throng in place of a few vocalists. But a concert, made up of even works like this, must be ponderous and monotonous—the origin, in fine, of this *liedertafel* music being social

pleasure, not artistic exhibition, and the thing losing proportion, significance, and spirit, when wrested from one to the other use.

Thus much concerning the part-music, which, however, was by no means the only entertainment afforded by merry Cologne. Verily, without violently disfiguring truth in a figure of speech, its streets during those days may almost be said to have run Rhine wine, and its high places to have overflowed with champagne. Nor was the consumption of beer outside the Gürzenich Hall, by the singers who swarmed like bees round tables set in the street, assuaged by this outpouring of choicer liquors.—For once did I approach some understanding of what was required of our forefathers, in whose prime of jollity to-day's dinner lasted late into to-morrow; since, after having gone through a banquet at a German *table d'hôte*, at which every dish seemed to be doubled, and every glass thrice the usual size, and every kind soul quadruply determined to touch glasses with the two Englishmen, for some four hours, we were only let to leave the table, because new entertainers would carry us off, there and then, to a supper given to some of the strangers by

a private musical society. And the supper was like unto the dinner—nay, more arduous—for it consisted chiefly of glorious beef-steaks, and these, in plural number too, were not to be declined, even by Satiety diplomatically taking the form of honest compliment, and entreating to be allowed to listen how well an amateur orchestra was playing the overture to "Melusine." No: we might hear, but we *must* eat and drink all over again!—Strange to say, we live to tell the tale; and, stranger still, we woke without the sick reckoning of headache the morning after the feat.

Something more spiritual than this astounding conviviality was in store for us. The Cathedral, of course, was to take its part in welcoming the strangers, and gracing their festivity. On the Sunday morning, a high solemnity, in the form of the fullest musical service, was held there. This was easily manageable, without undue strain or improvisation. During the last fifteen years, there has been, I apprehend, no such celebration of the Roman Catholic orchestral Mass accessible as in the choir of Cologne Cathedral: since no where have so much skill and cost been lavished, by rendering that gorgeous rite

artistically attractive, to draw offerings to the temple. And, indeed, neither Protestant nor Catholic can at present frequent that magnificent building so much to worship as to admire; so great is the daily concourse of pilgrims of art, and so perpetual has been the excitement kept up, in regard to the possibilities of finishing the building. Time may show, whether the entire edifice will keep the promise made by the marvellous fragment that has so long and so justly been an object of rapturous admiration; Time must decide whether an expectation has not been stirred which it will be impossible completely to satisfy, or which, at all events, is not satisfied by the design to be worked out. Meanwhile, the gorgeous choir as it stands, with the flood of cheerful sunshine that streams down, tempered by the blended hues of its many-coloured windows —with its airy vaults, and its gigantic columns so light yet so robust, is not to be entered without that intense thrill of emotion, such as no everyday wonder can excite. But under the spell of such extraordinary efforts of human genius and daring, the mind is hardly still. Its mood is, perhaps, more apt to be one of aspiration rather than of prayer. Thus, every display of

another art in worship receives, in such a place, a peculiar tincture from the excitement and exaltation of the gazer's spirit. The rite, which elsewhere might become oppressive because too ornate and stately, acquires a harmonious fitness with the scene around it.

The Mass was Beethoven's Mass in C; and whether it was the glory of the locality or the glory of the music, or the welcome contrast to the ear created by the complete quartett of voices united with full orchestral accompaniments, after all that heavy male singing—I know not; but I have never been raised so high by Catholic music—artistically, be it repeated, not devotionally—as on that morning.

And here a word or two may be said regarding this Mass as a composition; in addition to the few former remarks offered;—since, while the work is perpetually in request, it is as curiously little talked of by the biographers and admirers of Beethoven, as if it was not from beginning to end full of Beethoven's self, instead of being, as some have said, written in the style of Mozart—instead of being by others (M. Berlioz among the number) considered as greatly inferior to his second Mass—such a composition

as Cherubini might have signed—and in some degree inexpressive, because (they assert) it is made up from music originally written to other words by its master. This is a hasty fancy, and a hard one.—By me, the Mass had been long known and studied, as a singularly perfect specimen of the composite style of sacred music.

In a former page, a point of particular originality and loveliness in the "*Benedictus*" of this Mass in C was noted; but I cannot resist further mentioning a passage or two, to illustrate the feeling just expressed that the work is too much "let alone," in place of its being universally cited as the finest practicable Mass in being.—And first, it may be generally remarked, that in his use of the voices throughout, Beethoven differs from his usual practice—in almost every movement silencing his orchestra here and there, to allow a full accompanied vocal harmony to be heard; and only in a single instance—the modulation on the words "*Deus Sabaoth*" in the "Sanctus"—straining his executants despotically by allotting to them passages of a dangerous or difficult crudity. In the employment, again, of voices with orchestra, the master was more felicitous, because fairer

than he has elsewhere been in his union of two forces, often so idly considered antagonistic one to the other.

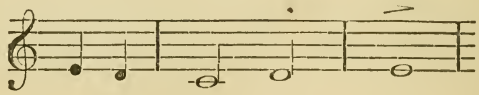
The "*Amen*" in the "Gloria," with its delicious contrast of airy *solo* and rich but soft chorus, is peculiarly noticeable as justifying a former remark, that Beethoven could produce the most consummate vocal effects of a ravishing beauty when he would. The "Credo" is throughout super-excellent, in the mingling of nervous and vigorous musical form, with the freest enunciation of a text most difficult to set, from the perpetual changes it includes. In particular, the treatment of the "*Qui tollis*," from the words "*sub Pontio Pilato*," must not be overlooked, as an instance of expressive writing, intense in its awe and solemnity, though without the least intermixture of theatrical effect. Strange that the poet, who could put forth powers like these, within strict limits, and under circumstances of comparative difficulty, should have failed, when a higher sweep of wing, and a more nervous grasp of emotion were allowed him, so completely as Beethoven (*for* Beethoven) failed in his "Mount of Olives,"—for there *Gethsemane*, with its awful mysteries, is brought perilously

near the foot-lights of the opera!—In the "Credo" of the Mass in C, again, there is not a bar in the "*Et resurrexit*" that will not repay study. Observe, especially, the animation introduced into that movement by the instrumental figure at "*et iterum venturus*,"—the skill with which it is suspended when the voices have to speak, and the almost colossal dignity into which it spreads and rises during the four bars of symphony, which are twice introduced to separate the clauses of the creed one from the other. There, too, we have vocal writing vindicated in its utmost freedom, while it is more than once brought near the pale of orthodox canon. Never was anything truer to the real church spirit, than the unisonal setting of the words—

"Et in unam sanctam, Catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam,"

which comes as near verbal parlance, as any example existing in Music—yet with what a gracious and simple coherence is it inwrought into the whole movement!—To the "*Benedictus*" I have adverted elsewhere.—The "Agnus" is full of remarkable points. In the restless breaking out of the words "*Agnus Dei*," with

their *tremolando* accompaniment, towards the middle of the movement, in the hurried muttered "*miserere*," which brings back the slower and more peaceful subject, may be perceived a first glimpse of that false conception which, in the corresponding portion of Beethoven's Mass in D, allowed him to bring drum and trumpet (behind the scenes as it were), in order that the prayer for Peace might be rendered significant, intense, and earnest, by the apprehension of "War's alarms." But it may be questioned whether Music contains a more perfect example of the effect made by repetition than is to be found in the use of the three notes—



towards the close of the movement, introduced as they are with a mixture of bold simplicity and picturesque surprise, such as no master, save Beethoven, has commanded. — There is nothing so new in Mozart's sacred music — nothing so sweet in the stately services of Cherubini, who is solemn, devout—but in tone, I think, less *celestial*.

Such are a few scattered hints thrown out in

regard to this fine Mass. In all human probability, it has never been executed as part of a service so finely as it was executed that morning at Cologne. In all probability it may never be heard again under similar conditions. In any event, the work and the performance make up one of the most precious musical recollections that my holidays have afforded me.

But this was not the only high artistic pleasure of which the Cathedral at Cologne was the scene during the *Männer-gesang-Fest* of 1846.

In one of the pauses betwixt music and feasting, the guests were shown all the works in completion of the *Dom*, and the workshops, in detail. The party which we were allowed to accompany was honoured by having Herr Zwirner himself (the head architect) for *Cicerone*. With what vivacity did Mendelssohn and he talk of the day when the nave should be thrown open, for which some great new composition should be written! Indeed, when we were led through the hives upon hives of Gothic ornaments ready to be placed — hundreds of grotesques, thousands of crockets, canopies, and

finials—it did not require an *Alnaschar's* imagination to conceive the whole pile raised and decorated to its full height and length, during the lives of those two strong lively men. Since that day—only half a dozen years ago—some of us have learned to feel as if nothing would be fulfilled,—as if nothing could be completed; and to associate that pile and the vast works done, and the vaster works still to do there, with those happy and hopeful visions, and their utter and untimely crumbling into dust.—Well, that was a happy day,—and those who are taken to their rest are not forgotten!

This Cologne meeting was brought to a close in the most joyous and picturesque of German fashions, by a serenade with a torch-procession to the house in which Mendelssohn was staying, and the presentation to him of a commemorative medal, with an address richly emblazoned.—It was a bright, balmy, summer night, and such darkness as the moon permitted to come down had not long set in before the *Malzbüchel*, a small irregular open space in which is the house where the composer was staying, began to be sown — set — crowded with spectators. After a short period of expectation, we heard

the distant sounds of a capital military band, and the confused hum of voices; and something like a long chain of fire-tulips came winding round the corner,—the lanterns of the serenaders taking the graceful form of flowers. — They ranged themselves beneath the window where the composer stood, and after a little singing, the hero of the night went down to thank them, and to receive the memorials and honours they brought him. I doubt if his life of many successes ever yielded him a moment which pleased and touched him more. Tears were in his eyes as he came back with the medal and the parchment: and he was too full of emotion for a moment or two to speak. But I think I now see his face beaming with its brightest and most beautiful expression, when he talked of the delight which these tokens would give to the dear ones at home; adding earnestly, and almost in a tone of deprecation, "You know I have never expected — never sought for these sort of things." And then he rallied to his usual quick and lively humour, as we looked down into the place below, and as the music and the lantern-bearers withdrew— the latter dancing as well as singing their way

home, I doubt not to some jovial supper—where more part-songs would be sung, and more Rhine wine drunk, by way of gloriously closing the great *Männer-gesang Fest* at Cologne.

Early next day the gathering broke up—a few scattered parties went up to sing on the Drachenfels; and to eat a modest dinner at the *Bellevue* at Godesberg; but these were exceptions. All was virtually over—and a few hours later still, when we found ourselves back in the midst of the London season, the sensation was much like that of those who wake from some delightful vision—and find that "behold it was a dream."

CHAPTER VII.

MADEMOISELLE LIND IN OPERA.

A prelude on one string—Railway companions—A physician of Cleves—Excitement concerning Mademoiselle Lind—Absurd rumours—The reality better than the expectation—"La Sonnambula"—Shakspeare's *Ophelia*—Mademoiselle Lind's *Julia*—Further impressions—Frantic partisanship—Mademoiselle Lind's private virtue an element in her public success—Some attempt at a character of her as an operatic artist—Her peculiar personal fascination—Her musical excellences—Nature mastered more attractive than Nature followed, in Art—Her failure in Mozart's operas (with a note on purity of tradition)—Summing up—The reasons why Mademoiselle Lind's career has been exhausting rather than quickening to Opera.

AFTER the summer's music of 1846, which had included the "Fête Dieu," at Liege, the great singing match at Cologne, and the memorable first performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah" at our own Birmingham Festival,—it became almost a necessity to take a few weeks of rest, solitude, and silence; before encountering new

crowds and new enthusiasms.—My *interregnum* betwixt the English music-meeting and the Frankfort Fair, was spent in Holland; than which country a loitering place more accessible, more quaintly picturesque and more cheerfully engaging, could hardly be mentioned.—My short journey and lonely sojourn there, however, are remembered not merely as a time of refreshment singularly grateful, but also for the sake of one or two of those whimsical passages of travel and persons enjoyed on the road, that might utterly have escaped me, had I had any better company than my own weary thoughts and languid memories of the sounds of the summer. I can never recall my journey to Holland without thinking also of the people I met on my way thither who played upon "one string."

We were five in the night mail-train from London to Dover: my companions, two gentlemen and as many ladies. Into more agreeable and polished society I could not have fallen. All four were so fresh and animated as to make it evident that *they* had not drunk "the season" to its dregs: cheerfully full of anticipation, and busy in judiciously arranging all those little means and appliances with which more expe-

rienced travellers, journey by journey, increasingly dispense.

"Where's the basket, Adela?"

"Don't know: there's no room for it beside me here, at all events. *Oh, these railways with the narrow gauge!*"

There went the "one string." So immediate an *apropos* could not but promise a second sound; nor did it promise in vain. The body, soul, and spirit of these well-bred and cultivated persons were wrapt up in "Broad *versus* Narrow!" Some slight civility brought the whole question, with all its justice and injustice, its issues and bearings, its profits and losses, down upon me—"like Kedron in flood." There was no difficulty—there could be no doubt—there *should be* no mistake! "Mr. Brunel was the one engineer in the world: Messrs. Stephenson and Locke—were truly narrow-minded; the derision of Europe,—ruined or worse." So much for the cannonade of fact—but we had, also, the light artillery of feelings and fancies.—The young ladies could not sleep; owing to the narrow-gauge! Their flowers, brought that morning from beyond Exeter, began to droop, and "no wonder, with all that frightful jolting!"

Narrow gauge again!—What should they see in Belgium? Could I tell them? I mentioned Ghent with its Van Eyck picture; and Malines with its tower; and Louvain with its Town Hall; and rich Liege with its painted church; and after that the fantastic windings of the railroad along the pretty valley of the Vesdre. I spoke of the rapid progress they would find in the works at Cologne Cathedral.—"Yes, no doubt; very interesting—they hoped it *would* be finished. But how was the stone conveyed? because, in all such cases, transit," &c., &c. Broad gauge again!—Then the conveyance of their carriage came upon the *tapis*. They were a little nervous—"did not see their way about it so clear as on their own railway." No matter what was the subject they got upon. Was it Mr. Dickens?—"They should never be able to manage to read his 'Italian Notes,' unless the railway," &c., &c., &c.—Was it Switzerland? What had the gentleman from "Geneva, the other day, been saying about the *Great Western?*"—Was it Italy?—Venice? The young ladies would "think twice about crossing the lagoon on a locomotive, unless" . . . In short, whether I was sleepy or not, I will not under-

take to decide; but I have a more than dim idea that the old idea of getting to Heaven "by the narrow way" was disparaged, on some one of the party speaking of the demise of some one else's first cousin!

I met the same quartett at two subsequent points of my holiday ramble, working hard at their controversy in "Stratford atte Bowe" French, or composite German, for the enlightenment of civil and patient neighbours at *tables d'hôte*. Mr. A——'s speech in Parliament; Mr. B——'s beautiful estate ploughed across by that paltry *Kettleby* and *Crutched Minster* line;—praise of Mr. C——'s pamphlet, and withering scorn of Mr. D——'s base article in a Quarterly Review (every one knew how many shares had been given to him for writing it)—and this seemed the sole topic, the sole occupation and enjoyment, of four people as considerate and refined as one could wish to meet *off* the rail. They had got up their subject with such a vengeance at home, that not even sea-sickness nor auditors who spoke neither French nor English, nor the abominations of Papistry, could supersede it, or discourage their enthusiasm!

Scarcely a fortnight after this, I fell in with a yet

more egregious performer on one string—quite of a different order: a zealous young physician, with whom I made half a day's journey betwixt Cleves and Düsseldorf. Every one knows what a sailor's "working his passage" is. This gentleman might have been prescribing to the value of his place in the *coupé* of the droning, dusty diligence; and to those who are "*used* at rattling bones to start," and who would almost as soon suffer a surgical operation as hear one described cranch by cranch, slash by slash, his conversation was more awful than agreeable.—I was full of Cleves, with its picturesque old castle, and its still woods, from which steal avenues of fine trees within the barriers of the town, and should have liked to discuss the place with some intelligent inhabitant. My *Galen*, however, could only talk of ailments, operations, interesting colics, and attractive eye cases. I allowed it to leak out that I had been detained at Amsterdam by fever. "He would prescribe for me: yes. Should I *see* him my tongue?" (He spoke a little English.) Meeting, alas! with obdurate rejection, he began upon the Conductor of the diligence; and after plying that worthy hard, elicited the fact that he owned to a little girl whose hearing was

sometimes confused. "She should boil a tea for her ears; he would tell her how"—and out came the pencil, and a leaf was begged from my memorandum-book (he would not tear his own), and the receipt was down in a trice—two pipes full of tobacco being claimed for his fee. All along the road, wherever the vehicle halted (and Patience can only number the places and pretexts for halting), out sprung my Doctor—up staircases, down courts—never contented till he had nosed out some new case, laid his remedy, and, I presume, received payment in kind; since, as we advanced, there severally broke out from his pockets two huge apples, a deadly looking and aged cake, the leg of a cold fowl freshly mangled, and a bottle of wine. He went the round of the passengers in the *beichaise* (or supplementary carriage); and at the place where we nooned, I caught him shaking the contents of a little blue paper into the soup of two dyspeptic-looking gentlewomen, who were too apathetic and much afraid to say "*Nay*" to his nimble assiduities.—Crossing the bridge at Düsseldorf, I saw him seize a soldier by the ear, whispering into it, I have no doubt, the secret of some particularly brave and

"venomous" pill; and I have never ceased wondering, from that day to this, whenever his image has turned up, whether, on taking the railway for Elberfeld, he did or did not attempt to exhibit his mystery, and prove himself worth, not his salt, but his hot water and coke, by offering to look down the throats of the old locomotives afflicted with wheezing. Except for *his* one string—I suppose, by rights, it should be called a ligature—how should I recollect my Doctor of Cleves?

Such passing adventures, and the brain-crotchets that they breed, are precious companions and aids to the solitary traveller. But what was the warm partizanship of my countrymen to the gauge elect—what was the professional single-mindedness of the *Galen* of Cleves, as a performance on one string—compared with the stupendous unison which awaited me in the Rhine Land, from Düsseldorf up to Mannheim?—the theme being everywhere and always Mdlle. Jenny Lind.—That was the year of the great Spanish match, for which the late King of the French perilled so much. Yet the Duke de Montpensier's hymeneals, and their possible bearing upon the balance of power in

European politics, came second as a topic to Jenny Lind.—Stirring changes, too, were just then expected to happen in Papal Italy: the chimerical idea that St. Peter's representative could and would make common cause with the private judgment of the People, had got fast hold of many sanguine persons; but what was this compared in importance to the question whether Jenny Lind had or had not quarrelled with the King of Prussia, and turned off his theatre in absolute disdain?—Free Trade, again, was beginning to trouble the Germans, as an idea too large to be shut out, too sensible to be let in; but though Mr. Cobden was a great man, his greatness was small, and easily decided, as compared with that of Jenny Lind.—Nay, even that question of questions, that dream of dreams, that hobby of hobbies — the formation and maintenance of a German Fleet—over which so much had been said and sung, and (till then) so little spent, was taken up and laid by as the standing dish to which every one might return when any one pleased—dull and tasteless as regards interest, if any one had a new green-room fact to tell concerning "*Die Nachtwändlerin*," or "*Die Regiment's Tochter*"—any new

prophecy regarding the matrimonial plans of the cynosure of eyes and hearts, great and small, noble and burgher, learned or landlord, musical or moral—Jenny Lind; and still, and after that again, talk of no one but Jenny Lind!

One would like to think that some de Sevignè, or Grimm, or Walpole, had noted down, for our children's diversion, a tithe of the anecdotes with which the entire Continent was then ringing, regarding the Swedish *soprano*, and which attached to her movements a lustre and a curiosity and a *prestige*, totally independent of her musical merits, that hardly seem to belong to times the boast of which is that they are sane and unpoetical. Whereas, before Paganini came, every one delighted to add some new story of *diablerie* to those which gave his pale face, and meagre figure, and epileptic attitudes when playing, a supernatural interpretation,—every new panegyrist of Mdlle. Lind's *Amina*, or *Alice*, produced yet another plea in favour of the artist, by publishing some fresh instance of simplicity, unworldliness, gentleness, beneficence "that blushes unseen"—till the amount of admiration, when launched against one's musical sympathies, became heavy to positive oppres-

sion. For an oppression some of us felt the assumption conveyed by all this praise, advertisement, and illustration, of private worth, modesty, and unconscious virtue—that the same were attributes and qualities which, till Mdlle. Lind came, had been unheard of in the annals of musical life.

Apart from all these newspaper stories—so dear to the tribe of Barnum, and such other coarse speculators—musical witnesses, foremost among whom were Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, had promulgated such high praise of Mdlle. Lind, as the only great songstress who had been heard in Germany for many a long year, that the Frankfort Opera, where she was to sing at the holiday time in question, naturally became a place of no ordinary curiosity to the musical traveller. Then for those who wished to hear Mdlle. Lind, it was necessary to go to Frankfort—since there was not a person, in 1846, who had speech with, or who possessed the secret of Mdlle. Lind, that was not convinced, by her own solemn assertions again and again repeated, that to England she would never come. Disturbed in her conscience, it was said, at having made an ill-advised engagement to sing in

English, which she had been compelled to break, from her inability to learn the language—unable to cope with the ladies enthroned in our Italian Opera-house — having, as she meekly wrote, "neither the beauty, the assurance, the vocal resources, nor the charlatanry of other *prime donne*"—she must be sought for in Germany, and, what was more, sought for quickly—her resolution having been also taken, herself and friends no less steadily asserted, to retire from the stage at the close of her theatrical engagements for 1846.

These tales had wrought up our cousins along the Rhine, as I have said, into a fever, which I despair of describing. Our autumn tourists, too, did their part to help on the madness. For where is the English lady, musical or unmusical, who would not become utterly frantic with curiosity, so soon as it was proved to her that not a place was to be had in any theatre where Mdlle. Lind sang, weeks before her arrival?—I was in the great coffee-house at Bremen, in the midst of a full assemblage of merchants, two years later, in the autumn of 1848, at the moment when the news arrived of the hideous riot at Frankfort, which included the bit-

by-bit murder of Lichnowsky and von Auerswald by the rabble. But that fearful story,—which, it might have been fancied, must come home so closely to all who had a stake in the country,—produced, I can aver, an excitement merely trifling compared with the rage to which the *table d' hote* at "the Giant" of Coblenz, was lashed up by an interrogatory tourist in 1846—who ventured the innocent question, "Whether Mdlle. Lind had as much execution and fancy as Malibran?" The roaring, the screams, the angry eyes, the furious gestures, which answered that "*Whether?*" are even now in my ears and before my sight as I write. One might as judiciously have inquired whether Father Rhine was or was not a French river!—Save for a certain audacious faith that no place of public amusement is utterly impregnable, were three times as many seats sold as the room contained, I might have turned up the Lahn, in place of going on;—so riotously was I assured that, "as for getting a place to hear the Lind at the Fair, that would be now impossible—even," so ran the withering sarcasm, "for an Englishman!"

Nor did the excitement droop when Frankfort was reached. Every hotel contained more than

one august party from this little capital, or the other distant watering-place, who, like myself, had come to Frankfort expressly to hear Mdlle. Lind before she left the stage. Thanks to the providence of that inimitable character, a thorough German landlord—and the courtesy which I, at least, have found unfailing, in travelling through the country—a good seat was found for me. But the prelude was not played out—the curtain not drawn up—even then. The day before she was expected to arrive, out broke the fatal news that Mdlle. Lind had suddenly thrown up her engagement in consequence of fatigue and illness—that she was gone into Switzerland to refresh her health—that she was not coming to Frankfort at all!—Who could doubt, after this, that the Lady must be a great singer? Gabrielli's freakish self, whose freaks have kept her name alive in the history of Music, could hardly have ventured a higher stroke of self-assertion.—Next came the tale to table, how indefatigable Herr Guhr, who then was the musical director of the Frankfort Opera, had taken chaise and four, under the cloud of night, in pursuit of Mdlle. Lind, to persuade her to postpone her illness till after she had

fulfilled her engagement to the famishing people of Frankfort. His journey, at all events, proved to be no fable. In due time Herr Guhr returned, with cheering news for a public all but maddened by the sudden loss of its idol. Mdlle. Lind was positively coming—not just then, however, but in three weeks' time. —Here was oil upon the waters!—an unhoped-for reprieve!—a piece of consideration and condescension how far more attractive than the punctuality of any artist, who could only keep her fixed day like any other common creature! If average enthusiasm could resist being fascinated by this flight, German enthusiasm, at least, could not. — So with cheerful hearts the waiters upon Mdlle. Lind disposed themselves hither and thither—some to Homburg—some to Stuttgart, to witness the bringing home of the Crown-Princess, then a bride—some to emulate the *prima donna*, and make a dash at Switzerland—until the fourteen days were over. They came to an end at last; and, this time, Mdlle. Lind *did* keep to her engagement.—I saw and heard her at Frankfort, in German translations of Donizetti's "La Figlia del Reggimento," Spontini's "La Vestale," and Bellini's "Sonnambula."

That any song could bear out the promise of such a symphony as I have described was hardly to be hoped for. But need it be told that Mdlle. Lind's singing could be no disappointment, to any one who had endeavoured, out of all this parade of exaggerated rapture, to pick such facts as had enabled him beforehand to form some idea of the quality of her voice and of her special musical excellences? It is only those who have no clear appreciating powers, or who think it cold and cruel to desire precise information, that find themselves disappointed with Venice, or with St. Peter's at Rome; or with any other far-famed thing of beauty.—In hearing Mdlle. Lind at Frankfort, I found, as usual, the reality far better than the expectation. I had been prepared for the unevenness of her voice—for the weakness and veil upon the octave below D, as contrasted with the octave above; but it proved more powerful, with all its possible softness and sweetness, than I had expected. I had been told that Mdlle. Lind's executive power was great; but I was surprised in her application of ornament, in "La Figlia del Reggimento"—by a daring and freshness, mixed up with the reported brilliancy, which proved

that she could create as well execute embellishments. I had heard that her skill as an actress of certain parts was considerable; but no one had described to me those touches in her acting of those parts which, whether arrived at by thought or hit upon by impulse, were as poetical as they were peculiar. For instance, in the last scene of "La Sonnambula," Mdlle. Lind's slow, sad, half-conscious destruction of the flowers so long cherished in her bosom,—which she let drop, leaf by leaf, as the lament, "Ah, non credea," went wandering and wailing on—came home at once as a beautiful, fanciful, and melancholy invention, justifying the warmest praise and the highest hope, and calling up those dreams and associations which only genius, as distinct from talent, can call up. Who could see and hear that scene, without thinking of Shakspeare's lady—

"of ladies most deject and wretched"—

with her flowers, and her snatches of old northern melody, and her desolate fate? I will leave calmer critics to decide, whether it is in the province of Art, that, while a songstress is presenting *Amina*, she should suggest *Ophelia*:*

* As another illustration of the occasional felicity of conception which distinguished the acting of Mdlle. Lind, I may mention a

but—in spite of the chorus of Swiss peasants on the stage, and the canonically tumble-down and tattered mill in the back-ground (the state whereof tells as manifestly of the run of the opera as of the scene-painter's taste)—there stood and sung *Ophelia*, the maiden loved and left by

point in her *Lucy of Lammermoor*. This was in that scene in the second act of Donizetti's opera, where the heroine's ruthless brother thrusts upon her the letter which makes her believe *Ravenswood* faithless, and acquiesce in breaking the contract sworn to him beside the Mermaiden's Fountain. The actress at first merely glanced at the paper and devoured its contents; then, like one resolute to wake herself from some abominable dream, she constrained herself, anew unfolded the fatal document, and deliberately possessed herself of its meaning. From that moment, however, her reason was destroyed, as well as her will broken. The frenzy of her last fearful scenes (as M. Berlioz subtly remarked) was then indicated and prepared for. This might not be Scott's *Lucy Ashton* (indeed, Mdlle. Lind's whole treatment of the character was too loud, too ungentle, too wildly tragical for our idea), but it amounted to dramatic creation.—That some such appreciation of Mdlle. Lind's peculiar gifts may have occurred to those who watched her closely, and judged her finely, is proved, I think, by Mendelssohn having chosen "Loreley" as the subject of the first opera he meditated, the *finale* of which (its only complete portion) makes it evident that of Mdlle. Lind he thought, while writing the *soprano* part. There the mournful desolateness of *Ophelia*, and the distraction of *Lucy*, were to be set in a framework of fantastic and supernatural influences. It is difficult to conceive the scene fully rendered by any one else save her for whom it was written.

Hamlet: the most mournful, and almost the sweetest, of Shakspeare's creations.—But even more than by Mdlle. Lind's *Amina* was I struck by her singing and personation of *Julia* in Spontini's "La Vestale."

I shall never cease to regret that this fine opera was not given in England before Mdlle. Lind left the stage; since she might have broken the curious spell of indifference in which our public has always remained regarding it, and have kept off the menaced exhaustion of our repertory by the present of one masterpiece more. Though the northern face could not look the part of the Roman vestal virgin,—its owner obviously found something sympathetic, and to which her powers were thoroughly adequate, in the story. Her stolen inverview with her lover in the temple, her heroic deliverance of him from peril, her detection by the side of the forgotten altar on which the flame had expired, and her terror, at once superstitious and womanly, under the tremendous *anathema* which closes the scene, gave scope to her finest acting.—She was there as original, powerful, and impressive, as she was weak and conventional in "Norma." If the classical spirit was wanting, the struggle of the

virgin's heart was present. It was a character, too, in which few of the present generation could compare her to any great singer—the opera, like all Spontini's operas, having been generally avoided by highly cultivated vocalists of the Italian school.

Such were my first impressions of Mdlle. Lind, strong enough it will be owned to delight the most exacting; and of a quality totally separate from and superior to any that I have before or since received in the opera-houses of Germany. Nor had I any occasion to regard them as delusions; but it is no less true that they received few subsequent additions. The limit of Mdlle. Lind's general conception of character was reached on those three evenings; and later, the reproduction of the same spirit in comedy, in sentimental drama, and in serious tragedy (however it might now and then be varied by episodical features of invention), left judgment more free than judgment should be in the theatre, to consider, to arrange, and to weigh the value of her operatic gifts, graces, and shortcomings.

Backhuysen himself, however, who is reputed to have put to sea whenever foul weather

was coming on, in search of materials for pictures, can hardly have studied his subjects under a more stormy atmosphere than that which surrounded Mdlle. Lind during her entire stage career; and which made the taking of notes and the registering of attributes a service of peril to any one more desirous of Truth than of Fashion. It seems already like a dream to recollect, that, so lately as four years ago, in London, all discussion of the gifts of this great singer—or any attempt to range her among the brilliant list of dramatic vocalists in which Pasta stands the first and greatest—was simply impossible. So many sympathies and party interests got mixed up with the merits and popularity of Mdlle. Lind, that to hint that the lower octave of her voice was veiled, was considered as the attack of a *Mephistopheles* upon her charity; while to speak amiss of her *Norma* was rated by new opera-goers (who had broken vows against wicked opera-going in favour of so much virtue) as a black and covert defence of all manner of iniquity in art.—There was as prurient a curiosity to illustrate the new singer's most private virtues as something celestial, by prying, and fetching and carrying

anecdotes, as has been shown in the case of those unhappily suspected, when prosecuting antipathy has been interested to prove them unchaste mothers, unnatural fathers, bankrupt citizens, and in every transaction, great or small, so many falsehoods and failures.

These follies were too openly and intimately displayed, at the close of the great period of German music, to which these pages refer, to be left out of its record. But ridiculous as they were in those indulging them—mischievous to Art, as encouraging the depreciation of every other artist living and dead, that the idol might shine brighter and look taller by contrast—and strangely disturbing as they were of peace and good understanding in private society—the fact is not to be gainsaid, that during her short career on the opera stage, Mdlle. Lind exercised over the majority of her audience a peculiar fascination. Something of this, of course, was owing to the reputation for virtue and simplicity, which had been so wondrously advertised — something to the uncertainty of her movements. Something also belonged to her presence; to the intense and unworldly, if not supernatural expression of her counte-

nance, which held fast many an eye that soon tires of regular beauty, or of features the smile or the sorrow of which may be read at a glance. With all her apparently direct and simple truthfulness in presenting herself to her audience, there was in Mdlle. Lind's aspect something eager and deep, and mysterious, which called up visions of *Undine* with her new-born humanity, and of a thousand other legends of the North, in which winds, and waters, and groves, have their speech and their part, and where their spirits are permitted to mingle in the play of mortal passion. Were we to fall into the humour of that mystical nonsense which is again taking its turn as a drawing-room excitement, this sudden and singular attractiveness of Mdlle. Lind, apart from all personal beauty, might be at once classed, analyzed, and tabulated. I might tell to which Angel of which Planet the charm was due, as historically as it can be told how Signor Manuel Garcia trained her voice. But I can only record the share which personality had in the success of Mdlle. Lind as an actress, without in the least professing to give the *formula* of the spell. Other of her weapons of conquest may be touched more closely and certainly.

Perhaps, in music, Mdlle. Lind's most excellent attribute has been her wonderful power over *sostenuto* tone, in every degree of force. There seemed no end to those long peculiar notes, so full, so soft, yet so fascinating—the employment of which, no less than their quality, was eminently calculated to deceive the ear, as to their place on the scale. Then, though never was voice more exquisitely under its owner's command, Mdlle. Lind's upper notes had a certain effort in their production, which, when it is accompanied by unfaltering mastery, never fails to enhance the value of the thing produced. However exquisite be such a bird-like volubility as Madame Cinti Damoreau's, it is not so brilliant as the rich and firm and *vanquishing* execution of an artist like Pasta, by whom every note is shaped, and rounded, and measured, so as to acquire a meaning and a value. Spontaneity is a delicious thing in singing—but it is curiously seldom accompanied with solidity or real sentiment; and without these the neatest *staccato*, or the most voluble *roulade*,—the most unimpeachable chromatic scale, the most dashing *arpeggio*, or the most warbling shake, will never satisfy the ear, nor mark such

traces on the memory, as were made by Pasta's singing of "Il soave e bel contento," or by Mdlle. Lind's "Ah! non credea," in "La Sonnambula," or by her last prayer at the grave-side as *Julia* in "La Vestale" of Spontini.

It is curious to note, as an illustration of that capriciousness which has had no common share in the command exercised by Mdlle. Lind over her public,—that the same vocalist who could draw such an effect of power from music neither commanding in its science nor delicious in its melody, seemed to lose half her vocal supremacy on the stage, when music such as Mozart's was the question. As *Susanna* in "Figaro," while the acting of Mdlle. Lind was busy and spiritless (neither that of the lady nor of the lady's maid), her singing was anxious, monotonous, bald, and formal — without enjoyment, and, it seemed, without sympathy for her task. Throughout that opera, the impression made on me was that of one perpetually saying: "*Hear, how very conscientiously I am singing Mozart!*" "*Admire how determined I am not to commit the slightest appoggiatura.*" Her very gradations of tone seemed to be laid aside, in obedience to

this false notion of classicality. That firm yet easy elasticity, that graceful propriety (how different from audacious self-assertion, or from servile self-effacement!), which make Madame Sontag's singing of Mozart a study, for all who are in quest of the true tradition,* were totally

* That the Vienna tradition of singing Mozart's operas does not bind the vocalist to a bald and literal enunciation of the text and nothing but the text, we have had proofs in the singing of Madame van Hasselt-Barth, Madame Jenny Lutzer, and, most recently, Mdlle. Zerr—all vocalists formed in Mozart's own town, and who may naturally be supposed to possess some idea of the manner of executing his operas, sanctioned and provided for by himself. But this newly fashioned edict, in command of an utter and servile plainness, which, if carried out, would utterly destroy all the singer's individuality in art, seems to me to receive contradiction from the music of Mozart itself—even if we had not tradition to confirm us—even if we did not know that Mozart wrote for singers, who were nothing without their changes and their closes. That to apply ornament unsparingly would be an insolence—that to employ it out of place and out of style is a musical offence, to be repudiated by all musical people—are facts which by no means imply that to apply and employ it *at all* are cardinal sins. It is the promulgation of such a canon by modern Pedantry, which has caused one-half of the transgressions found so nauseous by severe folks and purists who are never so complacent as when they can "make *those* singers keep in their right places." Without some discretionary taste, delicately and scientifically exercised by the *Susanna*, the *Zerlina*, the *Fiordiligi*, the *Pamina*, of Mozart's operas, I am satisfied that no performance of his music is classical—otherwise in conformity with

wanting to Mdlle. Lind's delivery of the music of "Figaro." From the time—it appears to me—when she became fully alive to the extraordinary power which she could exercise, of her sole self, in music of a far inferior order, she became averse to merging the sorceress in the interpreter—avoided, more and more distinctly, all operas in which there was anything like combination or contrast of female characters, multiplicity of parts,

his intentions.—For the satisfaction of the cavillers, let it be added that such permissions by no means apply to the vocal productions of all the great German composers. Gluck wrote in control of—Beethoven in antagonism to—his singers; and in the music of either (the *Rondo* from "Orfeo" forming, perhaps, the exception), the addition of even an *appoggiatura* would be intolerable. Mendelssohn, again, wrote so as to allow no space or exercise of fancy for the vocal embroiderer; and thus, to alter or add to his music, would be to injure it, by showing an arrogant disloyalty to the master's wishes and meanings. Nevertheless I well recollect the quiet smile of pleasure with which even Mendelssohn used to receive a shake exquisitely placed in the second verse of his delicious "Frühlingslied" (Op. 47); and it must not be forgotten, by all who desire to see the question fairly argued out, and illustrated by facts, not dogmas, that the first singer of *Elijah* in Mendelssohn's *Oratorio*—Herr Staudigl—was sanctioned, in one of the finest pieces of dramatic *recitative* which the work contains, to heighten the effect, by substituting one note for another—the upper G flat, I mean, in place of D flat—in the scene with *Baal's* priests, on the last repetition of the words "*Call him louder.*"

or contest of emotions — all theatres in which rivalry might be apprehended — all music in which creation did not redound to her instantaneous glory and unquestioned supremacy. Such *phenomena* were to be seen during Mdlle. Lind's theatrical career, as the execution of Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable," with the omission of the entire two acts containing the part of *Princess Isabella*, for the purpose of exhibiting her *Alice* in the fullest relief. "I cannot think," said Mendelssohn, when speaking of her in his most enthusiastic manner, "why she always prefers to be in the bad theatre:" adding, after a moment's pause, "and she sings bad music the best,—which is odd."

Not odd, methinks, to those who have considered the lady, her genius, and her career, dispassionately, and as legitimate objects of examination and comparison; and who admit that there is a genius which can only find its field of operation in monopoly and exhaustion—in an incessant search for those most feverish emotions and violent sensations—an unbroken course of which cannot come naturally, nor be maintained, without a heavy price paid somewhere, or by some one. These bystanders, without in the slightest

degree undervaluing Mdlle. Lind's rare powers and high accomplishments as a singer—without for a moment questioning the peculiar hold on public sympathy possessed by her—must have come to the conclusion that her own illustration, not the advancement of her art, was her one great motive throughout her operatic career; and that effect, not reality, was the object ever present to her ambition. Hence the curiously narrow limits of her repertory — hence her frequent migrations from theatre to theatre —hence, in part, that mistrust of, and disinclination to, the stage, which led her so early and finally (as it is understood) to relinquish the opera-house for the concert-room.—That a genius such as I have characterized, is but a genius of the second order — whatever be its physical appliances — whatever be its technical acquirements — Posterity will hardly question. That to say so contemporaneously is no sacrilege, I feel satisfied — whatever be the private virtues of the artist: since every hour of irrational idolatry wears away something of its sincerity from public judgment; and thus bears *upon* the career of

artists to come, essentially not less worthy to please than Mdlle. Lind, but more scantily endowed with the power of putting every gift out to compound interest.

THE LAST DAYS

OF

MENDELSSOHN.

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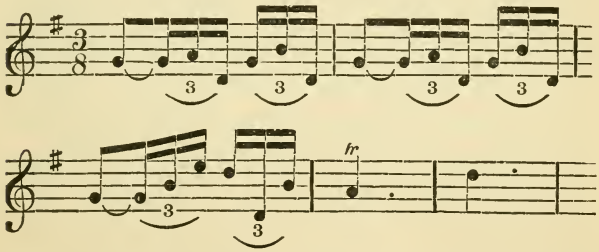
The last chapter a sad labour—Interlachen in 1847—Change in Mendelssohn's appearance—Walk up to the Hohenbühl—Rossini's "Guillaume Tell"—Plans for new musical compositions—His painful misgivings—The music composed by Mendelssohn at Interlachen—His opera-projects—His anxiety about foreseen troubles in Germany—His Swiss drawings—Shocking piano—Organ playing at Ringgenberg; his last performance—His interest in Italian music—Up to Lauterbrunnen—The fall of the Staubbach—Mendelssohn's death—The tone of the Leipsic public after his death—Some attempt to characterise his genius in composition—The theory of the decline of Music ill-based—Mendelssohn's activity and conscientiousness—His melody—His variety—His devotional elevation—His orchestral skill—His resolution to make progress—*Dis aliter visum!*—Conclusion.

THE last chapter of a record of holidays, each one of which has been marked with some new pleasure, is of itself a mournful one to write. It becomes doubly so, when its subject is a

last meeting with one whose death in the prime of every blessing which makes life desirable has stripped holiday-time to come of its freshest musical interest and chiefest hope. There are many besides myself to whom Germany and German music are gravely, perhaps irreparably, changed by the untimely death of Mendelssohn.

I passed the three last days of August, 1847, beside him at Interlachen in Switzerland, very shortly before his return to Leipsic, and that fatal attack of illness which ended in his death there on the fourth of November. He looked aged and sad;—and stooped more than I had ever before seen him do; but his smile had never been brighter, nor his welcome more cordial. It was early in the morning of as sunny and exhilarating a day as ever shone on Switzerland, that we got to Interlachen; and then and there I must see the place and its beauties.—"We can talk about our business better out of the house:"—and forth we went,—at first up and down under the walnut trees, in sight of the *Jungfrau*, until, by degrees, the boarding-houses began to turn out their inhabitants. Then we struck off through the wood to a height called, I

think, the *Hohenbühl*, commanding the lake of Thun and the plain with Neuhaus and Unterseen,—with the snow mountains all around us. It was while we were climbing up to this nook that the tinkling of the cow-bells, which adds to, rather than takes away from, the solitude of mountain scenery, came up from some pasture-land not far off. My companion stopped immediately, listened, smiled,—and began to sing

from the *overture* to "Guillaume Tell." "How beautifully Rossini has found that!" he exclaimed. "All the introduction, too, is truly Swiss.—I wish I could make some Swiss music. —But the storm in his *overture* is very bad!" And he went off again into the pastoral movement: speaking afterwards of Swiss scenery with a strength of affection that almost amounted to passion. "I like the pine-trees, and the very smell of the old stones with the moss upon

them." Then he told, with almost a boyish pleasure, of excursions that he had taken with his happy party of wife and children. "We will come here every year, I am resolved. How pleasant it is to sit talking on this bench, with the glorious *Jungfrau* over there, after your Hanover-square Rooms in London!"

But Mendelssohn must needs be drawn back into the concert-room, even at Interlachen. A new composition for the opening of the magnificent Concert Hall in Liverpool had been proposed to him; and this was to be talked over. He had already a new *Cantata* in view, I think, for Frankfort; and mentioned some text from "Die Herrmannschlacht" of Klopstock, as the subject which he had selected. "But that," he said, with his own merry laugh, "would never do for Liverpool. No: we must find something else." He spoke of Napoleon's passage of the Alps as an event he wanted to see arranged for music—again repeating, "I must write something about this country—but that, again, will not do for England!"—I mentioned Wordsworth's ode on "The Power of Sound," as a noble poem full of pictures, from which, perhaps, portions might be detached fit for a composer's purposes; but he

seemed to treat the idea of describing the various effects of music in music as too vague and hackneyed; and moreover objectionable, as having been done completely by Handel, in his "Alexander's Feast." Then he began to fear that he could get nothing ready by the time mentioned —"for you know," he went on, "something of mine is to be sung in the *Dom* at Cologne, when the nave is thrown open—That will be an opportunity!—But I shall not live to see it!" and he paused, and put his hand to his head, with a sudden expression of weariness and suffering.

He had composed much music, he said, since he had been at Interlachen; and mentioned that stupendous *quartett* in F minor which we have since known as one of the most impassioned outpourings of sadness existing in instrumental music—besides some English service-music for the Protestant church. "It has been very good for me to work," he went on, glancing for the first time at the great domestic calamity (the death of Madame Hensel), which had struck him down, immediately on his return from England; "and I wanted to make something sharp and close and strict" (interlacing his fingers as he spoke) —"so that church-music has quite suited me.

Yes: I have written a good deal since I have been here—but I must have quiet, or I shall die!"

I will not swear to the very order of words which Mendelssohn spoke,* but that day is too brightly printed in my memory, for a topic, or a trait, or a characteristic expression, to be forgotten. Life has too few such.

In answer to my inquiries concerning the opera on which he was understood to be engaged, he spoke long and freely concerning the theatre, and his own plans and purposes with respect to it. "The time has come when I must try what I can do," was his language, "and after I have written four or five operas, perhaps I shall make something good. But it is so difficult to find a subject."—Then he discussed many which had been proposed to him; speaking in the strongest manner of the unauthorised use of his name,† which had been

* I may be permitted, however, to say that his use of English was much after the manner described. He understood and wrote our language thoroughly well; the slight touch of the foreigner in his speaking made it all the more racy. Sometimes his epithets were most precious. I remember once his venting his displeasure against a songstress whose behaviour had offended him, by declaring that "she was like an arrogant cook."

† It is more than possible that the subject had been suggested to M. Scribe, out of deference to Mendelssohn's known pre-

made in London by announcing "The Tempest" as having been commenced by him with a view to its performance at a given period. "The book is too French," he said, "and the third act is thoroughly bad. I would not have touched the opera till all that had been entirely

dilection for it. Years before, Shakspeare's play had been arranged by Herr Immermann, as an opera for Mendelssohn to set; but then, also, unsuccessfully. The difficulty of throwing the interest of action and situation into the principal characters, such as should in any degree compensate for the omission of the exquisite poetry to which their thoughts, fancies, and feelings are *set to music* by Shakspeare—was felt, I suspect;—though not the point of making the composer perceive that the subject is essentially intractable for Opera, save in the somewhat melodramatic form preferred by the French. No "intrigue" (to use the technical phrase) presents itself in the persons and relative position of *Prospero*, *Ferdinand*, and *Miranda*;—and hence the French dramatist, true to his principle, that a play is no play, and an opera no opera, without an intrigue, was driven to expand the idea of *Caliban's* odious persecution of the magician's daughter; and to produce a tissue of scenes, which, if they had been acted in place of being evaded, no English audience, at least, would have endured to witness. The difficulty of reconciling his dreams with the requisitions of the stage and the necessities of musical form—his aversion to every thing hazardous and flagrant, yet his impatience of undramatic insipidity and dullness—were among the chief causes why Mendelssohn never wrote for the theatre. He may have been as much too curious in waiting for the faultless *libretto* which never would have come, as Rossini was too ready in setting any book and every book, which contained a few airs, duetts, and a *finale*.

altered. — And I never would tie myself to time in such a hasty manner! No; when I have finished something, I dare say that I shall get it produced some where." He then went on to talk over other Shakspearian subjects; in particular "The Winter's Tale;" a sketch from which had been laid before him: — this seemed in some degree to have engaged his liking. "Something very merry," said he, "could be made with *Autolycus*." How merry he could have made it, the world has since learned by the publication of his *operetta*, in which the knavish *Pedlar Kauz* plays so notable a part. Truer comedy does not exist in German music—not even in the most comical portions of Mozart's "Die Entführung,"—than the dancing song of this precious knave, or the part taken by him in the serenade of the village girl, with its sentimental caricature of the German watchman's droning call.

"We have no one in Germany who can write opera books," Mendelssohn continued. "If Kotzebue had been alive . . . *he* had ideas!" and he warmed himself up as he talked, by recalling how a prosaic occasion of mere parade —the opening of the new theatre at Pesth—

could inspire Kotzebue with such a characteristic invention as his "Ruins of Athens," so good for Beethoven to set. "Well; I must do my best with 'Loreley,' for Geibel has taken great trouble with the poem. We shall see." And then, again, he broke off suddenly, and put his hand to his head. "But what is the use of planning anything? I shall not live."

Who could attend to such a foreboding in one apparently so full of energy, and forecast, and enterprise? I confess that I ascribed it mainly to the impression left by the fearful trial which Mendelssohn had recently sustained in the loss of the sister to whom he was so tenderly attached.—Other painful ideas seemed to rise before him. He spoke with more fear than hope of the fermenting state of opinion in Germany, and its disastrous influences upon morals, education, good citizenship—on all that keeps society sound and makes home happy. He dwelt on the impatience of duty—on the sympathy shown to error and license—on the disregard of obligation—on the difficulties preparing for Germany by such perverse and preferred lawlessness among the middle classes—with tears in his eyes: for never was man of any

country more sincerely, affectionately national. He spoke, too, and bitterly, of the folly and falsehood of those in high places, who had alienated the hearts which they might so easily have attached, and who had demoralized under pretext of educating a great people; giving illustrations, instances, anecdotes (which I need not say are sacred), with a nervous earnestness which showed how seriously and apprehensively his bright and quick mind had been at work on these subjects.—Then he turned to his own future plans. I had often before heard him discuss that point in every artist's career, at which retirement from close personal intercourse with the public is desirable, but never so emphatically as that day. He was determined to give up presenting himself to the public so freely as he had done. "When one is no longer young, one should not go about playing and concert giving,"—and he expressed his strong wish, almost amounting to an intention, of settling down somewhere in the Rhine Land, not in any town, there to devote himself more eagerly than ever to composition. "I shall be near England," he added, "and can come over as often as you wish; and I shall be within reach

of our towns with all these new railroads; but I must live quietly, and get rid of all that noise and interruption, if I *am* to live." And again was repeated the mournful presage; and the glow faded from his face, and the sad, worn look came back which it pained the very heart to see.

Later in the day, I was shown, with eager pleasure, the drawings made by him at Interlachen; for he drew landscapes faithfully, if not altogether gracefully, though in colour "*that green*" was owned by him to be a stumbling-block. I was shown, too, his piano—"a shocking thing," as he called it; "but I am so glad that there was no decent piano in Interlachen! This will do to try a chord when I want it; but I do not wish to make finger-music."—And he touched it—the last time that I heard him touch a piano—that I might hear what an old kettle it was!

We were bound for Fribourg; and I asked him much about Mooser's famous organ. He said that he had heard wonders concerning its *vox-humana* stop. "How odd," he continued, "that such an expressive thing, which can almost talk, should be made merely of two bits of wood." I pressed him earnestly to go on with us, and try this marvel for himself. "No," he said,

laughingly, "those organists always like no one to play but themselves. There is always some difficulty:—and then there is the noise! I must give up organ-playing—and besides Winter is coming, and we had better draw quietly homewards." There was some talk, too, of his being obliged soon to make a professional journey to Vienna, which further limited his time. In short, never had I seen him so full of plans; and surely never, in the annals of any art, had artist more honourably arrived at well merited and universal fame.—Vanity of vanities!

The second day of our stay at Interlachen was cloudy, with occasional torrents of rain: all the mountains were "straitly shut up." Mendelssohn spent nearly the whole day with us; indeed, I never was near him without being reminded of what we are told of Sir Walter Scott, that he was as lavish of goodwill and time in the entertainment of his friends as if he had had no earthly other thing to do. When and how he managed to write, were not easy to discover. He spoke again of Fribourg; and, for half an hour, relented, and *would* go there with us;—and then, when he relapsed into his less enterprising resolution, he offered us, instead,

some playing on a poor little organ that very day. He had stumbled upon a solitary village on the lake of Brienz, to which there was no proper road—he had found the church door open, and the organ open, and nobody "to prevent him," and had been up there to play once or twice. The beauty and loneliness of the place, and the easy access to the instrument, had taken strong hold of his imagination. He would take us there that afternoon, and make a little music for us.

It was a gray, sullen, cold day, with passing showers, making an awning necesary for the boat; for by boat only could we get to Ringgenberg. There is something curiously secluded and quiet in the aspect of its little gray church, which stands on a knoll close to the lake, and is approached by rude steps carpeted with maiden hair and moss and the small-leaved clinging ivy. That day, too, as before, the church door chanced to be open; and the organ was accessible. It is the work of a Vallaisan maker — not super-excellent in tone, it may be supposed; but its pretty, gay-looking case, nevertheless, gives a certain air of splendour and fascination to that remote place of peasant-worship. A peasant boy was presently

found willing, for a few *batzen*, to blow the bellows as long as Mendelssohn liked; and he sat down,—I have since learned, for the last time that he ever sat down to an organ—for the pleasure of his three auditors.—It seems to me now as if he never could have played more nobly. After one or two movements by Sebastian Bach, he began an improvisation in C minor, which took the canonical form of a prelude and *fugue:* his fancy kindling as he went on, and his face lit up by that serene and elevated smile, the highest and most beautiful of its many expressions, which all who knew him must remember,—while he drew forth those long and rich chains of sound which

"bring all heaven before the eyes,"

as old Milton sang. I feel, when I think of this organ-playing, as if I had taken leave of the greatest music for ever; since, in that exercise of his art, the amount of science he would bring was animated by a radiant fancy, often dispensed with on like occasions; the want of which is supposed to be disguised by the glory of the sound, and the skilful intertexture of the parts. More perfectly, every genial sympathy, every sense of calm practical approval,

could not be gratified. There was the true, gracious, gifted man, old in experience, but young in the quickness of his sensibilities, to be heard—that day, it seems to me, more remarkably than ever. He was giving and receiving pleasure without parade; and from a store which had never been fuller of the highest thoughts and the richest fancies. Such things must come to an end; but they are never to be forgotten.

In the evening, chance brought the conversation on the ground of Italian music. He spoke again, in warm terms of admiration, of Rossini's "Guillaume Tell"—and, to my surprise, with a good-natured cordiality, of Donizetti's "Fille du Regiment." "It is so merry," he said, "with so much of the real soldier's life in it. They call it bad;* and to be sure," he

* I cannot resist availing myself of such an authority, to point out that the severe and unfriendly antagonism betwixt the different great schools of European music, which, of late, seems to have become fashionable, has not been fallen into by the most severely scientific masters of their art. A raw student, fresh from Germany, with a few chords and *Burschen* phrases, and a great deal of tobacco smoke, may fancy it orthodox to say, as I once heard pompously said, regarding the Italian Opera, "It has not the slightest interest for *me*"—and turn contemptuously on his heel; but Haydn and Mozart had more cordiality, discretion, and Catholicism. Even of grave, solid Sebastian Bach, it is told,

continued, with a half humorous tone of self-correction, "it is surprising how easily one can become used to bad music." Then he began to ask about Verdi—having heard that there was something like a new effect in some of his *finales;* and he would have this described, and shown to him, as well as could be done. He expressed a wish, too, to hear Handel's organ *Concertos* properly played—speaking about them doubtfully, and with hesitation, because of the frivolous and old-fashioned passages for *solo* stops, with which they were full—talked eagerly of the *Grand Opera* at Paris, as of a theatre for which one day he might be asked to write (I almost think that some negotiations had passed on the subject)—and referred to his sojourn in Rome, as one which had been full of the highest and most important influences upon his career. It was *apropos* of Rome, that some one mentioned Shelley's "Cenci," which had been

by Dr. Forkel, that being intimate with Hasse, the opera composer and Signora Faustina the *prima donna* (both settled in the Saxon capital), "he was always received in the most honourable manner at Dresden, and often went thither to hear the opera. He generally took his eldest son with him. He used to say in joke, some days before his departure, 'Friedemann, shall we go again to hear the pretty Dresden songs?'"

given to him by one of his English friends. He spoke of it with almost angry dislike. "No; it is too horrible! it is abominable. I cannot admire such a poem!"

The next morning, Mendelssohn drove with us to Lauterbrunnen. The view of the *Jungfrau* and the *Silberhorn* was superb as we went up the valley. Nor can ever have the fall of the *Staubbach* looked more magical than it did in the bright light of that late summer day,—its waters gleaming like a shower of rockets launched over the edge of the high cliff, their expended fires spreading and mingling as they fell and faded. Almost my last distinct remembrance of Mendelssohn is seeing him standing within the arch of the rainbow—which, as every reader of "Manfred" knows, the *Witch of the Alps* flings round the feet of the cascade—looking upward, rapt and serious, thoroughly enjoying the scene. My very last is the sight of him turning down the road to wend back to Interlachen alone, while we turned up to cross the Wengern Alp to Grindelwald. I thought even then, as I followed his figure, looking none the younger for the loose dark coat and the wide-brimmed straw hat bound with black crape

which he wore, that he was too much depressed and worn, and walked too heavily! But who could have dreamed that his days on earth were so rapidly drawing to a close?

The public records of the following November have already detailed, at sufficient length, such particulars of the last hours of the composer as I could here narrate. How the news of Mendelssohn's death was received in England, and by what manner of regret it was and is followed here, we know. That in his own land his fame for the future is solid, may be hoped, and, I think, believed, with good assurance. That his countrymen, however, have in the mean time done their character for good faith, constancy, and reverence for Genius and Virtue, no honour, by their change of note, after death, concerning one whom they had followed and fawned upon while he was living, is sadly true. When I remember the affection and idolatry of which Mendelssohn seemed to be the object at Leipsic—when I recall how the light of his presence there made a second-rate burgher town the centre of musical interest and attraction to

all Germany—nay, to all Europe—it becomes sickening to think, that no sooner was he cold in his grave, than his shallow and fickle townsmen began to question among themselves how far they had been administering to a real greatness, and whether there were not left behind among them some new prophets better than their departed oracle—by whom the musical notoriety of Leipsic, and the self-importance of its citizens, could be perpetuated.—We English have so long sat under German censure as a people hard, practical, wanting in musical taste, enthusiasm, and reverence—that this sudden coolness and indifference, nay even depreciation, with which the name and the works of Mendelssohn were treated immediately after his decease, in his own land, and by his own townsmen, must be recorded as facts which should silence the cavillers for ever!—The forgetfulness into which the very burial-places of Mozart and Gluck were allowed to fall by the Viennese—the appeal of Beethoven, in the last hours of his earthly desolation and pain, to the charitable aid of an English Artists' Society—are not more emphatic as an answer, to those who have been accustomed to exalt German reverence at the sympathy

of British selfishness, than the story of the first performance of "Elijah" in Leipsic, after the decease of its composer, to a room only half filled—than the immediate attempt made there to place upon the pedestal vacated by so melancholy and untimely a calamity, an idol no worthier of exaltation than Herr Schumann. Thus, at least, we English do not prove our admiration and our constancy!

Nor is the philosophical ease with which old allegiances are shaken off, and the professions of yesterday are falsified by the qualifications of to-day, a sign which bodes well for the future of German Music. There can be no real faith,—but in its place only an egotistic and vapouring desire of self-glorification—in a world where *phenomena* such as the Leipsic exhibitions I have mentioned, are not only possible, but, I fear, common. That feverish impatience of everything like duty and obligation, that wordy crusade in destruction of established things, without the least wholesome or consistent plan for their reconstruction or replacement—which have been so singularly displayed in the recent political movements in Germany, and so lamentably, as giving despotic folly a new lease

of power to misgovern—have seized upon Music,—not, indeed, to sap its foundations, but to bring Babel-worship into its temples. To examine and illustrate the nature and bearings of this anarchical outbreak, and to write its history, may be left, however, for future musical journalists. Let us rather still linger for a moment on the peaceful side of the Rubicon.

It will be thought by many that the present is too early a period for pronouncing a fair judgment on Mendelssohn as a composer, or for venturing to point out the place he is destined to hold in the history of German music. Immediate survivors are, and should be, always, more or less, at the mercy of their sympathies. That which is the newest, enjoys in its very novelty a temporary advantage, which must be allowed for as a flattering, if not a false light. It must have occurred to every musical reader as strange that, while so much space in the fourth volume of Burney's "History," is devoted to the executive powers of certain singers, and to analytical lectures upon operas and opera composers, whose very names are now forgotten, —there is no attempt, forty years after Handel's decease, to estimate the vast and permanent gain

added to Music by Handel's mastery over, and perfection of, the *Oratorio*. There are many reasons, furnished by both theory and precedent, for waiting.

On the other hand, the temptation to speak is great, in the present case;—seeing that a section of musicians is already professing to take leave of Mendelssohn as one who has closed a great period; and after whom, no more great works shall be produced, save by an utter re-arrangement of every known form, principle, and material of Music. The Art, say they, when fully ripe, must begin to rot, or else be born entirely anew. If Poetry there is still to be, it must speak in a tongue unknown, savage, and to which no established rules or canons can be applied. The old fountain is dry,—the familiar book is closed.

Now, this mechanical speculation and systematizing—curiously enough the most prevalent among the wildest folk—however comfortable it may be to all who love theories more than facts, and who prefer any "idea," be it ever so paradoxical, to truths which develope themselves slowly and with many exceptional features,—cannot be admitted to dispose of the future

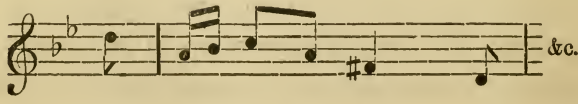
prospects of German music.—Let a few examples be offered to these dealers about of doom and discouragement. — Have matters hitherto proceeded with this chronological regularity—this regular going up the ladder and down again? Does the recognized supremacy of Beethoven's great *Symphonies* close the ear to Weber's *Overtures?*—Does the fantasy of his *Pianoforte Concerto* in G so bewitch us as to leave us no emotions at the service of the "*Concert Stück?*" Or take a yet more extreme instance;—there is no part of a concert, whatsoever be its ingredients, at which the odd, delicate, wayward, yet thoroughly artistic music of Chopin, if rendered in anything like the right spirit, comes too late. — For delicious spontaneous melody, and for a Shakspearian profusion of the clearest, most beautiful, and noblest thoughts, Mendelssohn cannot be rated as the equal of either Mozart or of Beethoven. All three were masters of musical science and orchestral combination. Yet the *Symphonies*, *Overtures*, and *Quartetts* of Mendelssohn can be played after those by Beethoven, without loss of effect; whereas those of Mozart cannot. Do instances like these illustrate the existence of formal and

sequentially necessary preferences? Do they indicate to us a world of which the limits have been reached, and in which constructive ingenuity has been exhausted;—where the public, moreover, has been rendered so fastidious by its worship of supreme genius that it will bow to nothing less supreme? Assuredly not. Leaving this theory of degradation to those who are concerned in proving it, let us see what characteristics of Mendelssohn's genius can be assembled, without rhapsody or false enthusiasm.

The amazing musical activity of his brief career has hardly yet been sufficiently considered. It was not maintained at the sacrifice of every other faculty and pursuit. To use a phrase applied by himself to another, "Not only did he love to give pleasure, but he would have some for himself, too." He could manage to read, and to think, and to make himself the delight of the choicest and most intellectual society wherever he went:—he kept up his taste for painting and for looking at pictures; he was devoted in all his domestic relations; his time was wasted by the importunities of coarse and self-interested people, from whose assaults there was no possibility of entirely escaping:—

he did the work of a strong and busy man, for some years, as merely conductor of concerts and festivals in Germany and in England;—and yet the list of complete works, produced by him, and sanctioned as such, is, its bulk considered, among the longest lists by the great composers, that could be cited. The mass of unpublished manuscript, too, that will never see the light, is known by the thematic catalogue of his works left behind him, to be still very large. And with him there was no slovenliness, no taking for granted, no gross and blurred manuscript, no hurried pages, no flagrant platitudes thrust in to do emergency-work. His music was the best that he could make; and its high finish is only equalled by its evenness of quality. He was always willing to retouch a new composition, without that irritable finicality, which, enamoured of retouching, ends by depriving the work of all nature and proportion. It is well known that the "Elijah" was largely altered after its first performance. The "Walpurgis Night" lay unfinished for many years—so, I believe, did the third *Symphony* in A minor,—and the *Symphony* in A major was withheld from the press during its composer's life-time,

because he expressed his intention of remodelling the first movement. He was as conscientious and exact as he was quick. I can hardly name one bar of slighted music which bears his signature. Some hard and dry and (as he called them) "rebellious" compositions were put forth in his young days; but they are knotted up, as it were, with close care and pains, not dashed off with insolence. They were the works of a boy anxious to prove himself a man among the double-refined intelligences of those by whom he was surrounded; and parading his science, his knowledge of the ancients, his mastery over all the learning of his Art. Year by year, less aridity, more grace, flexibility, and versatility, marked the thinking and the writing of Mendelssohn. There is the distance of a long life betwixt his early stringed *quartett* in A minor with the *lied* prefixed, and his last *quintett* in B flat, with its *adagio* (of all modern movements the most grandiose and impassioned) and its *scherzo* on a theme



as quaintly national as some old English "fancy"

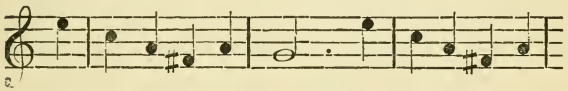
danced under the mistletoe at Christmas-time, or on the green at May-day.

That Mendelssohn possessed a natural vein of such rich, flowing melody, as Mozart and Beethoven commanded, cannot be claimed for him. Yet as a melodist he has been misunderstood and undervalued in no common degree —the fate, by the way, of every new composer who is more than a melodist. Those who have passed hasty judgment on him as "dry" have done so rather on the strength of some one work which does not suit their humour than on the bulk of his writings. Further, to every man's definition of melody, there goes more of temperament, association, and extraneous sympathy, than professors or amateurs will willingly admit. To those who have estimated Mendelssohn as poor in melody, let me recall from his instrumental works alone such themes as the slow movement of his first P. F. *Concerto*, the slow movement to his *Symphony* in A major, the theme of his *Overture* "Melusine," the *menuetto* of his *Quartett* in D major, the theme of the *andante* to his first *Sonata* with *violoncello*— all the subjects of the several movements of his violin *Concerto*—the *notturno* in his "Midsum-

mer Night's Dream" music—the *scherzo* in his A minor *Symphony*. If the list be not lengthened, it is from no want of example: enough specimens, however, have been cited to establish the proposition that those raising such a cry must err from either wilfulness or ignorance, even as those do who—on the strength of having sat through "The Messiah" till they know it by heart and fancy themselves profound Handelians therefore—deny to Handel the possession of grace, variety, and versatility of idea, in order that they may exalt his sublimity.

Or is variety brought forward as an indispensable requisite for the Genius who is to rank among those of the first class? Here, again, I think, Mendelssohn will be found to stand the test; in fact, the admirable propriety of his productions proves versatility as the attribute of one who wrote for every conceivable purpose, if not in every style. Who, for instance, that heard his "Ave Maria," or "Lauda Sion," could fancy either a Protestant hymn? Who that listened to his treatment of the *Corale* in his "Lobgesang" could imagine that noble movement belonging to a Catholic service of praise? The choruses to Racine's "Athalie," and to the trans-

lation of "Œdipus" are, in some respects, written under the same conditions. Yet the former is at once as French and Israelitish as the latter is German and Greek. There is not in Mehul—no, not even in Auber—a touch of melody more perfectly Gallic in its humour than this subject in the introductory chorus to "Athalie,"—



Yet how old-world and Jewish is the leading phrase of the *Overture*, with its antiphonic repetition, in another key;—while the wail on the passage to the English words—

"O David's regal home!"—

is a true strain from the harp, that, being hung on the willows of Babylon, could not give forth "the Lord's song in a strange land."

What the music of the Greeks was we can less dream or divine. Its rules bore, so far as we can gather, no such relation to our present canons of musical beauty, as did the rules of their sculpture and architecture to those of the moderns. But do not a symmetrical beauty, a sensual grandeur, a spiritual glory, akin to those

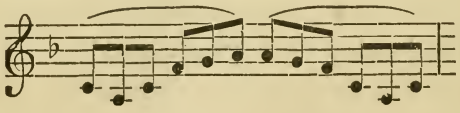
of the" Ilyssus," breathe through that delicious chorus in the " Œdipus"—

" Thou comest here to the land, O friend!"

so flowing, so grave, so entrancing, and withal so voluptuous? I know of nothing in choral music more sonorous in tone, more temperately rich in accompaniment, moving more gradually with a sonorous and stately *crescendo*, than the close of that movement. There not merely is the mellow fullness of the tenor instruments admirable, but the form of triplets in the accompaniment to the passage which sings the praises of the

" mighty God *Poseidon*,"

is new, and, by the flux and reflux of the figure—



indicates as closely and poetically as Art can indicate—

" the swell of Summer's ocean."

What Beethoven was to the rivulet in his " Pastoral Symphony," Mendelssohn is to the

great ocean, in the close of this admirable Greek chorus, and in the immense opening of his "Meerestille" *Overture;*—the former a sea-picture in music, which may be paired off with the "Quos Ego" of Rubens, or the notable "Triumph of Galatea;" the latter a piece of calm as limitless, as deep, as sublime, as any spread forth on his canvas by the great Van der Velde.—The above, be it lastly observed, are from the same fountain of inspiration as could turn into a volcano flinging out fierce and stormy fire, when the subject was a Pagan revel on the "First Walpurgis night;"—or, with a wish, could change like a dream, into showers of dew amid the moonlight—bearing the delicate and freakish burden of "a roundel and a faëry song," to the most exquisite faëry poetry in the world — that of Shakspeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream."

I could continue these illustrations of variety from the single and concerted songs of Mendelssohn to a great length. In his instrumental music I could point to the novelty of form given by him to the *scherzo*, to his having originated the "*Lied ohne worte*," were further examples needed. It is true that favourite

chords, intervals, closes, and phrases, recur again in his music—that he had a shy way of his own of returning to his first subjects as if the humour was to perplex, not to satisfy, the ear—a plainness, sometimes amounting to meagreness, in the setting of his instrumental melodies, arising from the most Spartan resolution to avoid meretriciousness of garniture,—and that these things establish a manner—a manner, moreover, as we unhappily know in England, at once tempting and not hard to imitate. But from some such manner no musical composer is free, save Beethoven—who may be said, with a pardonable stretch of language, to be only recognizable by his resembling no one, not even himself. Those who have accepted Mozart as a composer above criticism and beyond reproach, will be shocked to be told that in him there is as distinct a manner, as discernible a humour, as constant a reiteration of close, chord, and passage, in his writings, vocal, instrumental, sacred, and symphonic, as in those of Mendelssohn; but the truth nevertheless is susceptible of proof.

Once more, as regards devotional elevation of tone, wrought out in forms of the utmost originality, we shall find Mendelssohn rising in

proportion to the dignity of his subject. His sacred works are so much the best known of his compositions to the general world of English amateurs, that it is almost needless to offer instances from them; though one or two numbers (to use the technical phrase) of such rare felicity occur that it becomes a pleasure to recall them. Among these are the burial chorus, "O happy and blest are they," in "St. Paul;"—the tenor *solo* "The shadows of Death," in the Lobgesäng;—and the entire passage from "Elijah" beginning with the persecution of the triumphant Prophet by *Jezebel*, which conducts *Elijah* through the wilderness, where he is comforted by angels, and lastly is permitted to hear the "still small voice" announcing the coming of the Most High,—and to behold a vision of God enthroned among his Cherubim and Seraphim!—So various and progressive is the interest excited by the earlier portions of this admirable *Oratorio*, that the extreme force, expression, and vividly majestic sublimity of this peculiar portion, do not strike the hearer till he begins to reflect. Among mountains the highest peak does not always look very high. But the composer him-

self felt that—after he had painted the Prophet binding the ungrateful land in a curse, wrestling in prayer to the confusion of the priests of Baal, and receiving the last seal of Divine favour upon his mission by the opening of the heavens and the showers therefrom of the gracious rain upon the fainting land vouchsafed in answer to his call,—there was still a nobler thing to be told—there was still the Creator to be vindicated as greater than the greatest of his ministers. After the chastisement, the miracle, the triumph, there was still to come the humiliation of the mortal before the Monarch of angels and archangels.—That such a thought was present in his mind, when he wrote "Elijah," Mendelssohn's friends know; that he was not unequal to its expression, every ear and heart can bear witness that are familiar with the *Oratorio*.—In sacred, as distinguished from service music, nothing comparable to this whole superb scene has been written since Handel's time. Nay, it may be said without fear of disproof, that the "Rex tremendæ" and "Confutatis" of Mozart's "Requiem," and the loftiest portions of Beethoven's *Masses*, do not exceed in expression and power the four choruses, "He watching

over Israel," "He that shall endure to the end," "Behold, God the Lord passed by," and "Holy, holy,"—taken as a series, with or without their introductory matter or their connecting links. With regard to such inspirations, there is neither doubt nor fear of the future. They are, as Beethoven proudly said of his own music, "safe!"

Regarding Mendelssohn's skill in managing his orchestra, or his science as a writer in parts, there has never been, so far as I am aware, the slightest dispute.

Surely the above list of characteristics, then, makes up no common claim for a place among the noblest worthies of German music, for him by whom they were possessed. What further he might have achieved had his appointed time in this world been longer, it is idle to dream. Those who knew him, know that he could not and would not stand still; that every year of life brought with it its ripening, and sweetening, and deepening influences — and new power, and new pleasure, and new hope in his new fame—that he felt how much might still be done in Music, and longed to try to do it—Vain was this, as are all earthly longings,

and yet not wholly vain!—Such very aspiration did its part in completing the life and character of one who was happy because of his gifts and because of the love that they brought him—but happier in his honest and ceaseless desire to brighten, and purify, and extend them for the service of Music, and the service of his country.—There may come a day, yet, when the example of Mendelssohn's life, yet more than of his works, may be invoked in Germany. May this come soon for the sake of a people, who should be as great as they are gifted, and for the sake of an art which has risen to such eminence in their land!

THE END.

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